FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

VOLUME 33/NUMBER 12 DECEMBER 1962

Since 1949 the purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

LIGHTS

The candle is not there to illuminate itself.

IMPLIED though not visible in the extraordinary photograph on the cover of this issue is the candle lighted by the pilgrim praying to our Lady of Fatima. In light from any source man has immemorially recognized the perfect metaphor for a process which takes place within his own spirit. What is more beautiful than light? What provides a greater sense of safety? Of knowledge and perception? Of love? By what but a halo, the emanation of inner light, has man distinguished the holy and divine from the merely human? By what but "festivals of light" has he from the beginning been able to endure the darkest, briefest days of the year? Light is the theme appropriately occurring and reoccurring in the pages of this December issue . . . The theme is announced first by Georges de la Tour's marvelous depiction of the birth of Christ, all the plain, ordinary human details of which are endowed with significance by the glow of a candle shaded by a single hand. It is accounted for in the accompanying article about the long-forgotten painter who in his day had enjoyed the favor of the King of France. The theme is repeated in variation by the photograph of an icon of the Holy Mother and Child behind a glow of candlelight which illustrates an article on the Jesus Prayer. It is repeated in still another variation by a memory of Hannukah, when eight-branched menorahs were lighted day by day in celebration of the Jewish holidays. And it appears again in unexpected though perfectly appropriate guise at the conclusion of the article on the Confucian school in New Hampshire. Light is apparent in the time-worn faces of the elderly photographed at a senior citizen resource center. Light is part even of the title of the extra-fine short story called "The Burning Glass." It is marvelously captured the way children see it in the unusual photograph, taken by snowlight, on our center spread . . . . But there is no end to the meanings of light. — P.G.

The true lover finds the light only if, like the candle, he is his own fuel, consuming himself.

The opinions expressed in this issue are the authors and not necessarily those of the editors or of Fellowship in Prayer.

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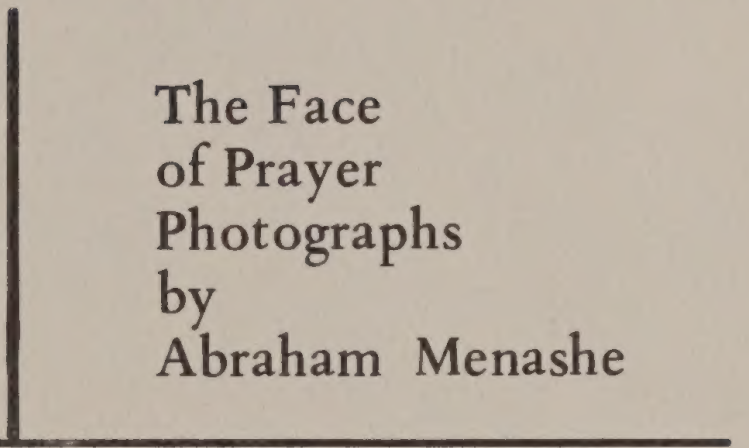

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COVER PHOTO, taken by Contributing Editor Abraham Menashe, is of the dirty bare feet of a pilgrim praying to Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal.

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"La Nativite" by

by JOHN S.D. GLAUS

IF there is one advantage of modern times, with its endless resource of information, it is that it allows us a full measure of historical perspective. We may brush through history with full speed or deliberate slowness, shifting the kaleidoscope as it pleases us. But there are moments when, in the attempt to reconstruct a life, we find that the facts are few and fragmentary. Then we must pause and proceed with circumspection and use the age, the events, and personalities instrumental in the shaping of that life. In looking at the Age of Louis XIII — that glorious age of Transition, for it is ever so dim on the horizon — we shall see at least one luminary re-emerge among others from the darkness: Georges de la Tour.

The Age of Louis XIII was a period of change, of hesitation, a moment in history which shattered the mould of the Middle Ages. The reign of Louis XIII was a period of complex issues, political and social, moral and artistic, of religious wars and the Counter Reformation. The times suffered from great ambiguities with a vast array of perturbing strifes of terrible savagery. Yet it was also an age which was compassionate in its nobility and virtuous in its aesthetic appreciation. It was then, beneath the surface — where conflicting currents blend — that a new development gestated and awaited the full term. This pregnant epoch prepared the way for the most splendid efflorescence of the arts, one unprecedented in its magnificence and unequaled in its gloriousness. Without

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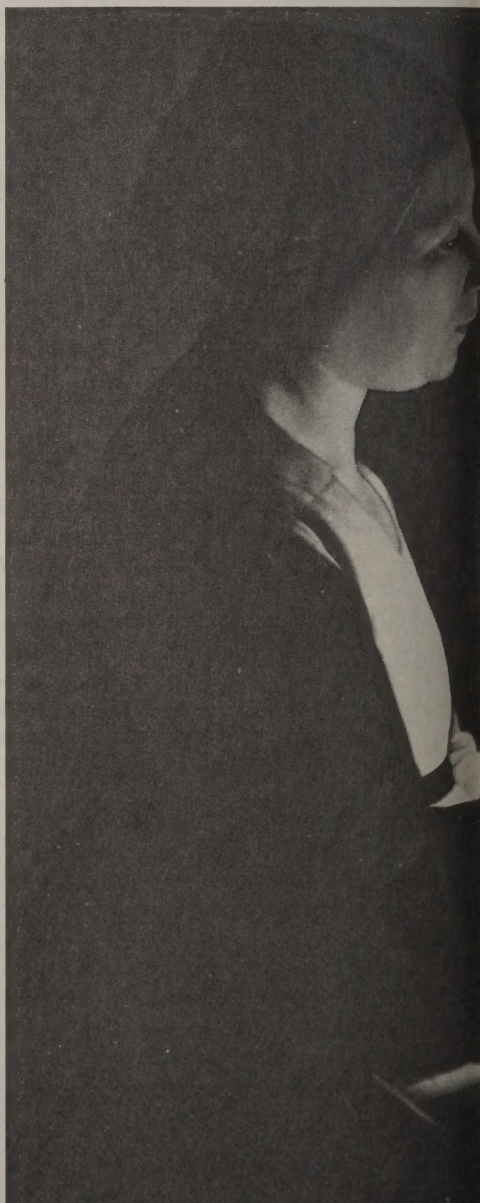

Georges de la Tour (1593-1652)

MUSEE DES BEAUX-ARTS RENNES, FRANCE

SHORT PRAYERS

by RAY REYNOLDS

"The perfect church service would be one we were almost unaware of; our attention would have been on God."

— C.S. Lewis

SHORT PRAYERS are the means I employ to live in the presence of God. I am continually amazed at how "arrow prayers" help to keep me calm physically, mentally, and spiritually.

I feel I live in the presence of God when I pray without consciously thinking about each word of my prayer. The combination of mind, heart, and feeling, together with a desire to be holy, helps me to think a simple mental prayer: the Jesus Prayer.

When I find myself thinking about my past sins, and when remorse and guilt begin to depress me, I don't allow myself to remain ensnared for long. I break the spell by thinking of Jesus, my personal Savior, and strive to live in his loving presence.

At times, I use words to return me to the Lord's presence: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." Commonly referred to as the Pilgrim's Prayer or Jesus Prayer, it was used for centuries by Christians of the Eastern Orthodox churches.

In the morning, after formal prayers of thanksgiving and prayers requesting God's protection, I usually begin to repeat mentally the words of the Jesus Prayer while showering, drinking coffee, driving three short blocks to pick up the *Times*, and preparing breakfast. During the remainder of the day, whenever I am not occupied with study, music, reading, or counseling, I repeat the words of the Jesus Prayer, which is my favorite.

Whenever I feel tired, ungrateful, uncharitable, resentful, or sorrowful; whenever I feel helpless, afraid, or in the face of danger, or even when I feel angry with the Lord, I repeat the Jesus Prayer.

More often than not when I take a coffee break, I reflect upon my thoughts, words, and deeds. Have I offended someone? Have I felt sorry for myself? Have I been honest with others? Here again the Jesus Prayer brings me back into the Lord's presence.

Before retiring at night, I take a brief look at my day and thank God for it. In bed, I repeat the words of my favorite prayer and, before you can say, "Lazarus, come forth," or "Morpheus, release thy hold," I am sound asleep.

A HANUKKAH GIFT FOR EVERYONE

A Story by D. JANI DRUCK

ONE typically cold and snowy December dusk I was walking home through the cozy neighborhoods of my pleasant little town, and the sight of a Hanukkah menorah in a window made me stop for a few moments. Six of the eight candles had just been lit by the ninth, the *shammash,* or servant candle, used just to light the others. Through the window, I could see a family laughing and playing together as they unwrapped brightly-colored presents. I was warmed by the peaceful happiness evident in this intimate family setting, and it brought to life for me the ideas and values behind the scene.

Hanukkah, the festival of lights, celebrates the Jews' retrieval of their freedom of worship from the Syrians and Greeks over 2,000 years ago. A small number of Jewish people fought, and triumphed over, mighty Grecian armies to win back the Temple which had been taken over and dedicated to the Greek God, Zeus. Once they had the Temple back, the Jews rededicated it to the God of Israel. Hanukkah, which in Hebrew means "dedication", celebrates not so much a military victory, but the reinstatement of a people's culture and customs of worship. Hanukkah is celebrated in the home, and is a joyous time of thankfulness for the right to worship in such peaceful, domestic happiness. The custom is to celebrate while the candles burn, each of the eight nights of Hanukkah. Traditionally, the candles are supposed to last about half

an hour, and during that time no regular work is to be done. It's a half-hour for domestic fun, pleasure, and gift-giving.

As I stood there watching the merry event, I became aware that as each second passed, the candles and the time were melting away. A current of sadness passed through me as I thought that this merry-making, too, would soon pass away. A brief half-hour a night for eight nights is not much to hold onto in the context of a year of life in our complicated times.

As usual, when I found myself becoming melancholic, thinking that life's pains and frustrations outweigh the moments of pleasure, I tried to rest my mind on thoughts of the Buddha and other great teachers who have taught us, when we would listen, that our attachments and our need to hold onto things in our worldly lives are what prevent us from feeling the pure joy of life. I stood and gazed at the lights of the candles, thinking of great men and women who have appeared to illuminate the lives of those who would hear them. As the lights grew softer and blurry under my gaze, I saw how much like Christmas lights they were, how they shone out into the night with the same joy in celebrating birth, rebirth, and renewal. As Christ is a light shining in many peoples' lives, showing the way, so these candles burned for me with steady radiance, mirroring a wordless feeling of faith, hope, and love that wells up whenever I see people worshipping their God, however they see Him.

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The Confucian School

by ELIZABETH SOCOLOW

THE CENTER SCHOOL doesn't have a center or a building you can see in Franconia, New Hampshire. The children at the school have moved each year to a new house, the location of their learning rooms determined by accident, insulation, and the ready supply of wood. It is cold among the White Mountains. Above the town the buildings of Franconia College stand crumbling, the first of the small, liberal arts colleges to go bankrupt in the recent stream of such events.

The Center School arose in part from that college death because its founders, Don and Carol Sheehan, were teaching at the college when it closed in 1979. Deeply involved in the area, they were neither about to move away nor able to send their older son to the public first grade. So they began a school in their home four years ago to express their vision of what education might be.

Carol Sheehan has looked at the human life cycle through two very different lenses: she is a student of medieval astrological knowledge about cosmic and human energies and she is also a teacher trained in Piaget's principles of child development. The great Swiss philosopher observed child development but lacked a prior framework in which to place the stages and forms and tasks of growth he saw happening in children at specific ages and in a predictable sequence. Carol is writing a book in which she places many of his observations into the framework of the medieval astrologers, particularly those who mapped the human life cycle onto the twenty-eight-year lunar cycle. In so doing, she comes up with some new rationales for the guidelines we can observe cross-culturally. She is particularly concerned with the growth that takes place between the sixth and seventh year. This is when self-identity is first firmly established. Many cultures mark that as an age of self-responsibility. Roman Catholic confession, for example, first takes place at seven. It is her belief that if that self-affirmation does not take place quietly and firmly at that time, the eruptions of the next such stage of self-absorption and self-definition which take place at sixteen and seventeen will show the marks of violent rebellion, confusion, difficulty with family that our current American culture is plagued with. It doesn't have to be like that. We can educate people toward harmony, with themselves and with others.

Don Sheehan's involvement with Confucius' writings provides the grounding for that process. Don is a professor of Greek and Latin. He spent some sixteen years, however, studying *The Great Learning* of Confucius, first in Ezra Pound's translation, then alone with books and dictionaries and the ancient Chinese characters, finally with a friend and scholar who lives across the border in Vermont and with whom Don went over Confucius' writings character by character.

At The Center School, children learn to discover their own wisdom and to

act in the world in a way that is responsible to their true nature and purpose. They are encouraged to ask their own questions, make their own decisions, and find their own path. At the same time, they learn to understand, honor, and respond to others — other people, other times, other wisdoms — and to integrate their own purposes with others. The curriculum has three main goals: to develop and maintain the academic skills and discipline necessary to live as a literate, responsible member of our society; to teach those permanent human skills and knowledges that have belonged to the human race from its beginnings and are a condition of its healthy survival (these include skills related to food, shelter, and clothing; outdoor skills and earth-wisdom; healing arts; various crafts; physical grace and well-being; and the making of music, art, poetry, game, story, and dance); and to teach self-knowledge, self-confidence, and their counterparts: the skills of receptivity and listening.

The foregoing paragraph is entirely taken from the brochure of The Center School. It is a day school for local New Hampshire people and its own leaflet nowhere mentions Confucius as the source of the educational methods and philosophy. We live in this world. Confucianism is not, on the face of it, likely to appeal to parents of day students in New Hampshire. The name might even turn people away. The brochure explains that workshops instruct the teachers in maintaining a balanced frame of mind throughout the schoolday, from 9 to 2:30, that the children are regularly involved in community activities some afternoons, that homestudy programs are available, accredited by local school authorities, for children who have faltered in public school and are studying at home, or for parents who prefer to teach their children at home with some guidance.

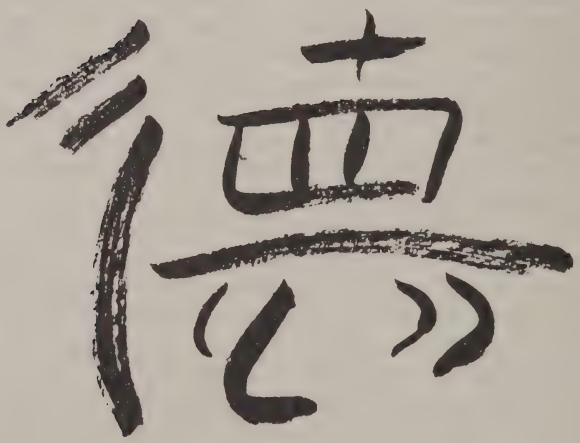
There are three classes covering clusters of ages with similar developmental tasks to accomplish: first through third grade (six-to eight-year-old children); fourth through sixth grade (nine-to eleven-year-old children); and seventh through ninth grade (eleven-to fourteen-year-old children). There is also a high school program.

At first the school was populated primarily by boys who had already had difficulty staying whole and learning in a public school setting, or else who were particularly valued by their parents. Now, however, girls are coming to be seen as resources as worthy of education as their brothers. They may by nature remain more docile and tractable in a public school setting, but the numbers of parents now choosing to pay tuition for their daughters has increased. Last year the school had thirteen girls and twenty boys. In the younger classes the balance of girls to boys was nearly equal. Carol Sheehan sees this as a hopeful sign of changing times. Given the general Eastern homage to both male and female principles yin and yang, the balance is pleasing to the Sheehans. Ideally, Carol would like to see all children start school at seven — after that many years in supportive, self-defining families. She is persuaded that the gender differences that we see as obedience in girls and rebellion in boys are brought about in part by exposure to peer pressure, group pressure, and novelty at the age of six, just when the early person is doing its first firming of self. If the personality is allowed to find its own coherence at

the proper times in the life cycle and with the proper intervals between such moments of identity formation, the gender differences that we know, with all their difficult resistances to understanding, social and individual, are much less likely to be brought into play.

Don Sheehan is particularly concerned that, once they are involved in the work of The Center School, children and parents and teachers come slowly to understand the source of its philosophy and methodology. He teaches a course for the older students called "The Great Learning". He conducts a weekend retreat for the families before school begins and in that relaxed gathering-experience some of these concepts are explored.

The primary principles of *The Great Learning* of Confucius are contained in a very few characters. In particular one of these, called *te*, pronounced "De", contains the core educational process that the school puts into practice.



The character has two seed meanings. Its graphic elements tell us to practice a straight gaze into the heart and to act on the results. The fundament of Confucian thinking about human growth is this: if people can listen to their own deepest nature, they will know not only themselves but self-discipline. Balance itself is part of what the heartbeat can teach us. And so extremity will not flourish if we act on what we see in this gazing inside. Moreover, individual harmony will radiate outward to the kingdom of earth itself and bring about social harmony. We are dealing with assumptions about invisible energies that do exercise influence, within an intellectual and cognitive framework willing to

accept their presence without demanding sensory or, what we would consider scientific proof of their existence. They can be regulated without being measured. Whenever this process of regulation and channeling was known, there was, in the visible chain of events we call history, social harmony in China. When the process was forgotten, there was chaos and social strife.

All that I have just attempted to translate conceptually is contained in the character of the *te* and in the name which is so brief. The *te* leads, however, to several important tributary pathways of understanding which are signified by other characters. It was Confucius' observation that if this practice of gazing straight into the heart and acting on the results is undertaken, the practice itself, the experience of that meditative exercise clarifies the way intelligence increases, leading to wisdom. Since the educational aim — and there is a direction or aim — is to become wise rather than to win prizes or status or honor, the concept of clarifying the way intelligence increases stands opposed to our western notions not only of targeting our ambitions toward a fixed and singular goal, but of positing a static intelligence that does not develop beyond a certain age. Our conceptual framework suggests and assumes that past adulthood we can accrete information but we cannot alter the nature of our spiritual and intellectual experience and being. According to Confucius, we can keep growing and changing toward death.

The second such important outgrowth of the *te* is that the process is not dry and what we might call cerebral. It is rooted in watching with affection how growth takes place, not just in the self but in others. Since we are all unique and particular, there can be no real competition between one human being and another, if there are no fixed goals to win. In such a condition we can only be our own best selves and encourage others to be their own fullest selves by appreciating their gifts. People are thus bound to each other in mutual appreciation and affection rather than in having bested the competition. They are ennobled and made joyous not by having the applause and self-gratulation of winning but in the identification that comes of seeing how growth itself takes place. Though it does not demand proof, Confucian thinking is deeply rooted in the core of the scientific impulse — knowing, being able to map, see, picture forth how a thing is shaped and feels and lives. If the concept of increasing intelligence challenges Binet, the concept of watching the growth of others with affection challenges Freud.

Finally, the *te* is rooted in coming to rest or being at ease in perfect equity with oneself. This is achieved in part through meditation and, in particular through the Confucian concept of stillness which invites us to enter peaceably into nature. The place of nature or the non-human environment in Confucianism is less emphatic than, for example, it is in either Buddhism or Taoism. But, though not elevated to a cardinal place in the wisdom, natural harmony is seen as an outgrowth of the *te*. The human energies entering peaceably into nature are not only influenced by but influence natural energies.

I was eager to hear from the Sheehans exactly how such educational abstract principles might find specific application. How many children really don't want the cherries and chocolate chip cookies distributed exactly equally

to honor our western concepts of just desserts? Predictably, the answer is that such learning, too, is developmental — that coming to be in perfect equity with yourself, you can indeed begin to see others' gifts and talents and needs as expressions of creation rather than competition impinging on your own needs. Emphasis in the school is placed precisely on aware and disciplined self-development.

For science, the teachers require a great deal of measurement. How a tomato plant actually grows is recorded daily. That external, objective, quantifiable exercise brings about a new awareness of the plant's process. While doing that precision work, the students are asked to put their foreheads, eyes closed, against the bark of a great plant and, thus leaning on a tree, to listen to the furthest-away sound they can hear. Often — and there is some calculation in this exercise — they will hear their own breathing in counterpoint to the breathing of someone else in the class, standing at some distance away. They are encouraged to think about how silently the tree grows. To watch internally is, literally, to hear. And as the paradox and relation between seeing and hearing form an identity there can be a new delight in realizing how connected the life processes are. To watch, in this case, to hear with affection the growth of at least another, is often accomplished in this qualitative plant experience that accompanies the measurement of the tomato. The nature of this affection is slightly different from that of our western notions in that it is genuinely more precise. It involves an analogic connection between the self and another. If I am very different from you and if we are connected not merely through mutual and complementary need, then how are we connected? By analogous, though not identical experiences: you breathe as I do, though at your own rate, and with your own precious rhythm, precious because it is common to life-sustenance, and precious, too, because it is unique.

The older students are asked to do ten minutes of journal-writing daily, straight writing, using the pen constantly and thereby forcing a kind of gaze into the heart rather than out the window. And the older students must also produce one-and-a-half page essays weekly on assigned topics. But the injunction against self-indulgence implicit in Confucian teaching is most highly developed in the history class where, the self-identity established, students from ten on are asked to become another through imaginative meditation, identification, and role playing.

There is a long exploration of slavery. One exercise asks the children to fashion a portrait of a sixteen-year-old black child in 1850. They are asked to describe in detail exactly what the masters had done to the slave. They are asked to imagine what they would do by way of escape or revenge. The exploration of slavery begins with a study of Columbus, showing exploration as a luxurious outgrowth of the slave-trade, not unlike the development of particle chambers, combustion laboratories, the theory of quarks and the exploration of outer space that came in the nineteen fifties and sixties as an outcropping of the atomic weapons industry.

Another large history unit is built on the Salem witch trials. The students are asked to enter into an alien belief system and to try to understand it by way

of their own. They are shown pictures of the herbs and plants of Massachusetts, instructed in the Puritan cosmology, and given transcripts to read of the actual trials. They are asked to defend or accuse the witches in a play trial, some playing governors, some citizens, still others the witches themselves. They conclude by studying Arthur Miller's *The Crucible.*

To enter into another person's world requires a knowledge of the self and a sureness and trust that are not defensive and are challenged by the creativity involved in the translation. It is something like an actor's art, which Shakespeare's age called *The Quality,* and which involved a quality of being that has some odd parallels with the practice of *The Great Learning.*

As I was listening to the Sheehans, I was looking at the character of the *te,* studying its elements and trying to understand what such ideagrams and pictures have to do with a certain journey of consciousness I had seen most often described in the west when I was studying sixteenth-century notions of the theater. In addition to teaching me for the first time something about Confucius, my conversation with the Sheehans fetched up the following touchstone.

My grandfather collected matchbooks. I can still picture how he held each bit of folded cardboard in his palm in the early evenings of my childhood. He told stories as he looked at those printed cardboard slips of all the towns he visited, one or two stories from each of the places he had to go to sell men's belts. Your grandmother may have pulled a tortoiseshell comb, a paper fan, a small commemorative silver spoon from an old sewing tin or cardboard cigar box. She told you her family history as she turned these few objects over. In the warm, dim kitchen light of rainy afternoons, all those other people came alive.

In cultures without written language and in those with highly developed traditions of telling stories out loud, memory boxes and necklaces of stones and feathers are used to retrieve sequences of words and images of special significance to the people. A seer fingers the blue feathers or the red bead and the coming of warmth to the cold houses or the origin of grain itself is at her fingertips. A bard touches the dried flower and remembers the words concerning the transformation of lizards to birds and the arrival of song itself from the flaming mountain.

Picture-writing, ideagrams, work on consciousness in this way. The written graphics are themselves the stones and combs and fans and feathers of a memory box. The characters picture forth the seeds of concepts and actions which are set moving in our storehouse of experience. Tempered by reflection and instruction and kindliness from others, words take root and branch and leaf, each in the proper time, when the small graphic bit of storied information is studied, gazed upon. Chinese characters work on our consciousness the same way a playscript does. For those adept in the art of remembering, memory cascades awake, bright as phosphorescence in the warm tides of the tropics. A small touch on the water and the light spreads as far as sight can travel, as far as we all can see.

The Non-Specific Basis of Ideal Prayer

by JOHN C. HORNBURG

"THY will be done" is an invocation made in prayer to assure that we have not asked for something that would ultimately be detrimental to us. It is a kind of disclaimer to any specific thing we might want which would be against

God's will. Therefore it is also a recognition of the mind's power to bring to itself what it fervently desires. In realizing that there could be danger here, we see the importance of being non-specific in prayer, and if we can examine what a true and complete non-specificity would mean, perhaps we can reach directly into that power which we have to fulfil desires, which is in its purest sense the power of God.

If we review how Jesus instructed us to pray we find it very non-specific. The Lord's Prayer begins with celebrations of God's glory: "Hallowed be Thy name." It then goes on to ask only for daily bread, forgiveness of sins, safety from temptation and deliverance from evil — nothing that could in any way violate God's laws. Then it ends in further celebrations: "For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever."

Jesus said that the father knows what we want before we ask for it. And St Paul wrote in Romans 8:26, ". . . For we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself makes the intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

In fact no thought on our part can divine the will of God. Rather we must depend quite heavily on his knowing what we need beforehand. This is because, while our thought process is a part of the natural world, God is transcendental Being. The two are fundamentally separate. Therefore not by works either can we be saved ("Lest any man boast," Ephesians 2:9) but only by that same all-encompassing grace.

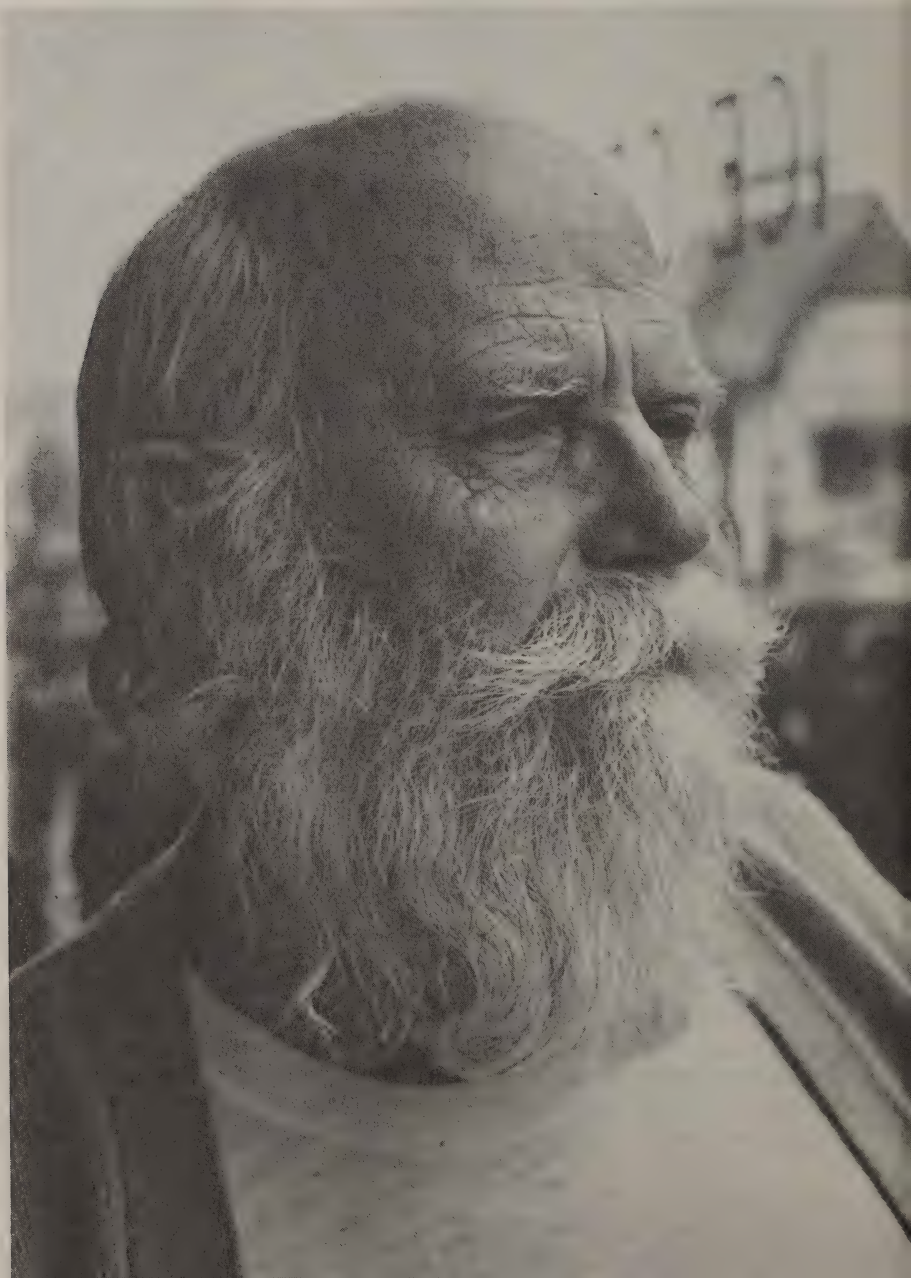
The specific nature of thought and therefore of prayer places it in opposition to the non-specific, transcendental nature of God. This suggests that, if we are to achieve ideal prayer, we must first obtain a thorough-going non-specificity of mind by which we become infused with the extranatural grace of God; that is, which allows the mind to absorb the spirit of God across the boundary of thought. This would fulfil St Paul's observation that "the Spirit itself makes the intercession . . . which cannot be uttered."

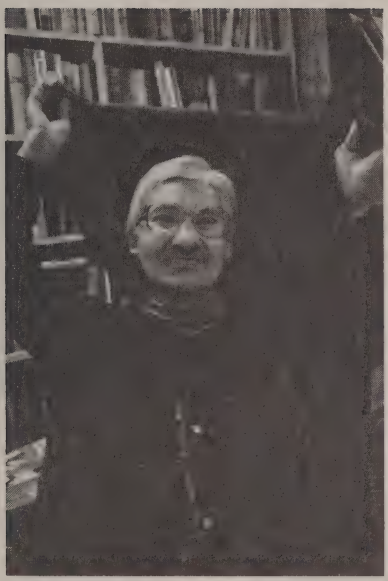
Furthermore it is at this point that we would achieve the divine contemplation or meditation of the true Christian mystics. And as experienced meditators know, this mental non-specificity is not a blankness of the mind but full awareness: When the system settles down, the mind can no longer be overshadowed by a specific thought to the extent that it seems to go blank. And when mental activity is ultimately resolved into non-activity, the mind is no longer localized by a specific channel of thought but attains a state of unlocalization in which it is aware, not of any created thing but of the creative force itself — an experience of unbounded, or pure awareness.

This is not a substitute for prayer (though for some, regular experience is enough to align life with the highest laws of creation) but is the true basis for it. When this experience is stabilized by practice, our mind is attuned to the extranatural knowledge which "knows what we want before we ask it." Our mind is cooperating with the will of God rather than working in opposition to it. Thus there would be no barrier to the attainment of anything we want in

(continued on page 60)

"The maps of their lives are written on their faces"

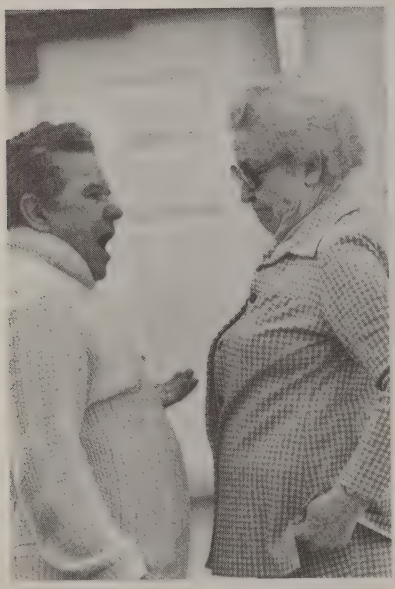


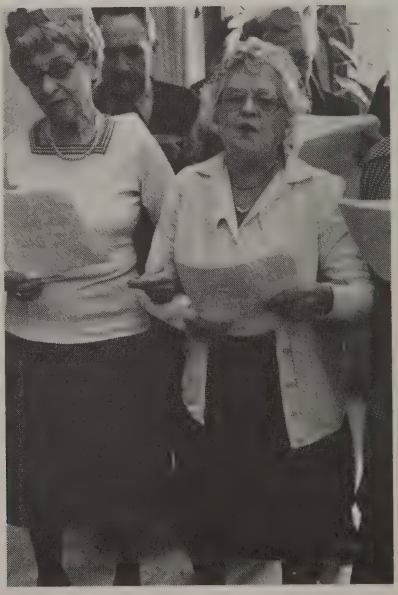


The Elderly

Photo-essay by ELAINE RAPAPORT

The Elderly

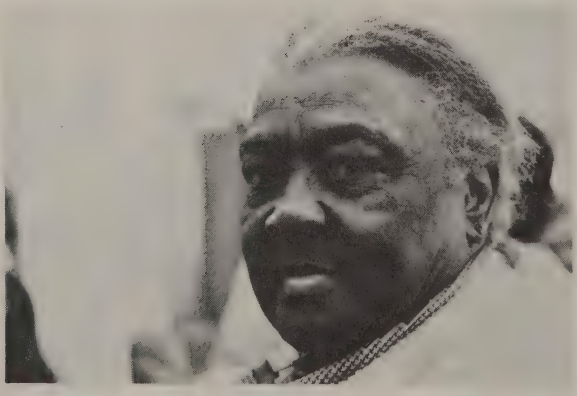


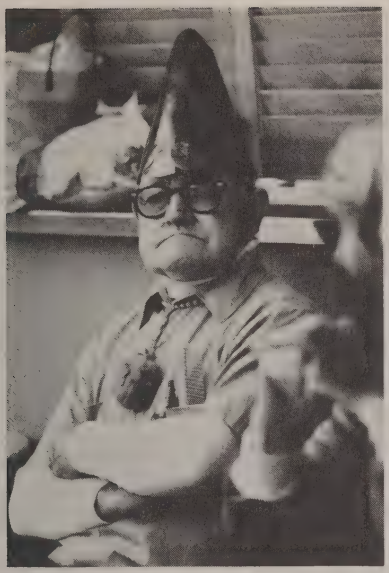


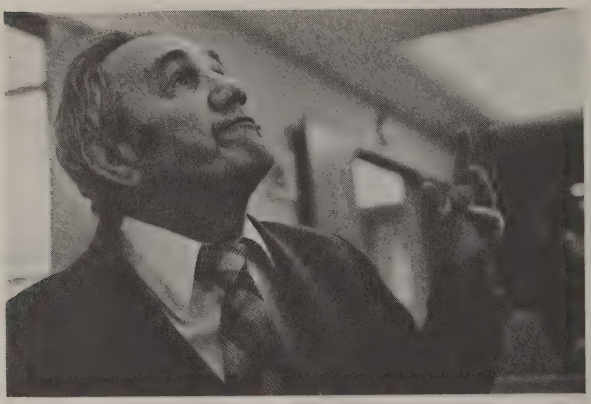
"As people told me their stories, the vivid descriptions took me on a voyage through time and space"

The Elderly

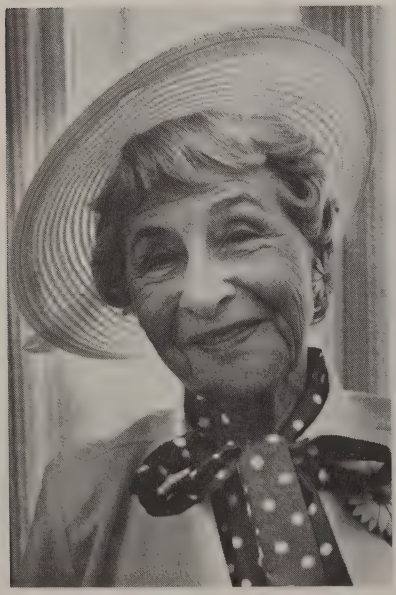
"Why do you want to photograph old and wrinkly people like us? Why don't you take pictures of young people or nature — that's beautiful?"

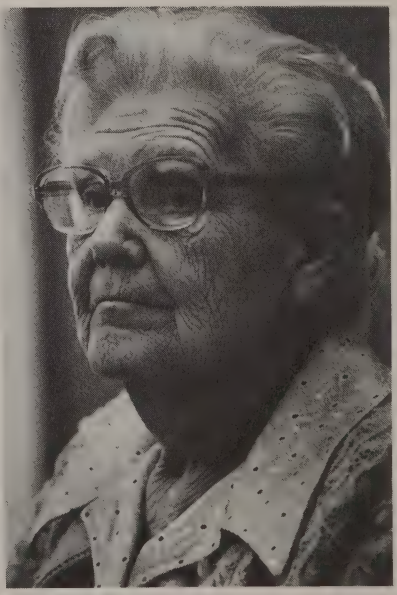






The Elderly





"Let us recognize ourselves in the old man and the old woman. It must be done if we are to take upon ourselves the entirety of our human estate"

— Simone de Beauvoir, The Coming of Age

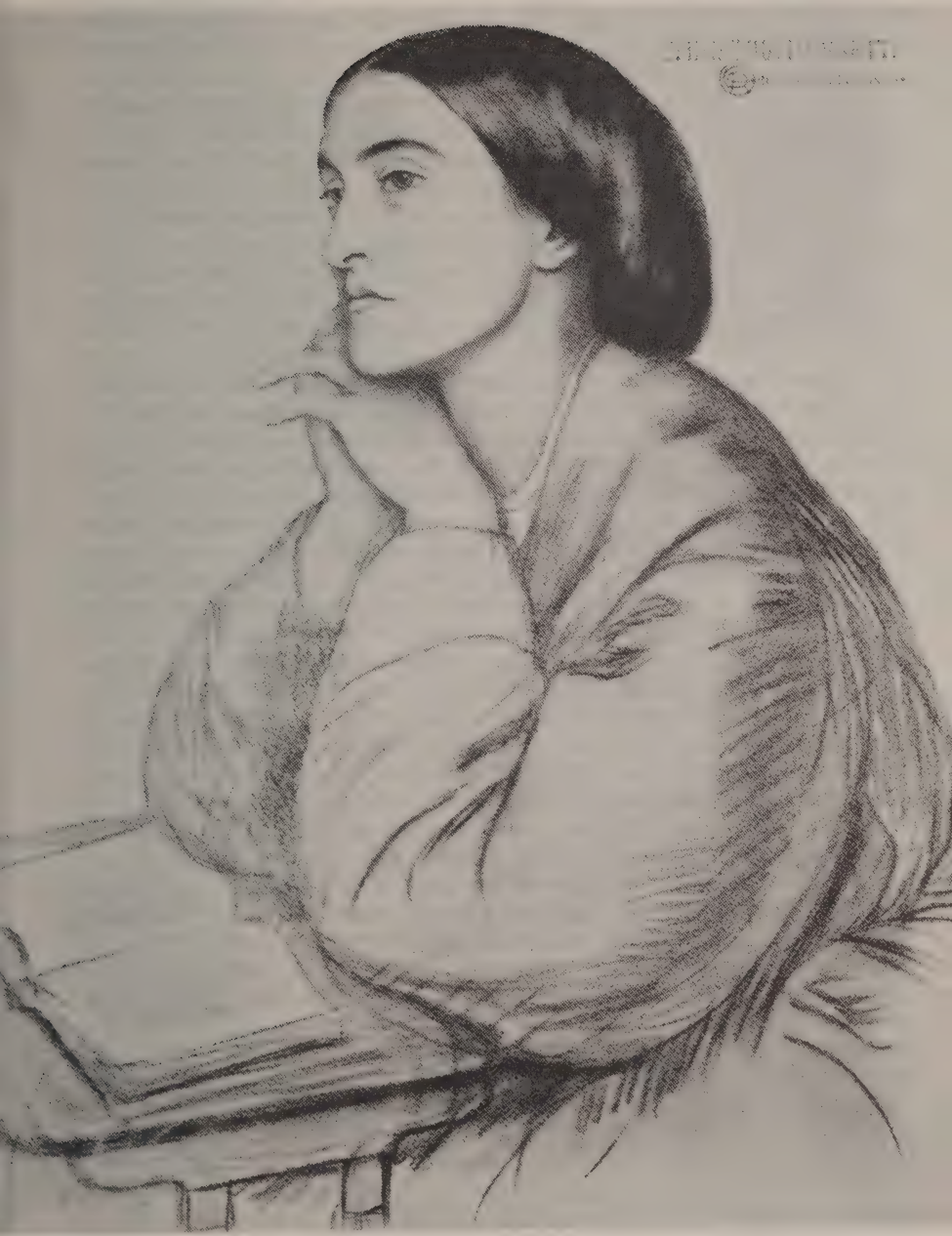
CHRISTINA ROSSETTI
THE POET OF SUFFERING

by JOHN S.D. GLAUS

THERE is something inexplicable about the intensity of fashionable taste and the violence which may erupt when one assumes a position stating what is fashionable and what is not. Either way, one is imbued with a sense of how important it is, or else one is entirely neglectful of its presence. The pursuit of fashionable taste is predicated upon personal affectations; and the only advice that one should impart to another is not to give any advice at all. One should follow one's own instincts, use one's own reasons, and draw one's own conclusions. This applies as well to fashion in clothing as it does for taste in poetry; and this odd mixture of clothes and poetry is the perfect starting point for the unfolding of Christina Rossetti's life.

It is important that we establish the fact that Christina herself had terrible taste in clothes, but produced "poems that sing like music in one's ears — like a melody by Mozart or an air by Gluck." Even her brother, Dante Gabriel, from whom she sought guidance for many things, declared that it was best to consult his sister on matters pertaining to poetry and not fashion since she possessed "the heart of a singing bird, but dressed like a pew-opener." So indeed our curiosity is pricked, and to insure that our quest will lead to its consummate end, we shall have to explore the streets and places she walked; search the nooks and crannies where she played as a child; rattle all the drawers where she wrote her poetry, and peek in those places to see from whom or what she hid. Christina might be shocked at our desires to peek in those places where a man's gaze was not permitted, for Christina lived during the Age of Victoria "when the curtains were very thick and the women were very pure," But our intentions are very pure, and we do not wish to disturb the glorious dead nor be indecorous. Neither do we wish to see if her legs were made of marble — we shall see that they were not — but rather ascertain the delicacy of the clay.

"I think that she is the best poet alive . . . The only thing that Christina makes me want to do is cry, not lecture." So wrote Sir Walter Raleigh in 1892, and Sir Walter was an estimable critic. He was listened to, and consulted, and made the reputations of a few, and astonished many by the acerbic volubility



of his condemnations of poor poets. So we know that she established herself as a poet, for Sir Walter tells us so, and since we know that fashion was not her forte — since she dressed anyhow — we shall have to question the muses to find out what gave her the power to make men cry.

Let us whisk ourselves back to the 1830's, and situate ourselves with the Rossetti family at 38 Charlotte Street near Portland Place. Gabriel Rossetti, Christina's father, was a clever and gifted intellectual whose liberal stance in political matters caused him to flee from his native Italy in 1821, and to take refuge in England, where he remained an exile. The mother, Frances Polidori, was of Anglo-Italian extraction whose Italian history stretched back to the 12th-century, and who still had relatives inhabiting a grand *palazzo* in Tuscany. She was a woman of extraordinary good-breeding and sensitivity, and in her own right a professed intellectual. So as intellect attracts intellect, Frances refused the courtship of the English gentry, and married the penniless exile.

There in Charlotte Street, Gabriel and Frances settled with their four young children: Mary, Dante Gabriel, William and Christina. At that time Charlotte Street hummed and buzzed with a life all its own. It was an area of London which attracted segments of the immigrant population, which in turn gave it its continental flair. Smells and aromas filled one's nose, and the shouts of heavily accented tongues filled one's ears. Although there was no doubt as to the respectability of Charlotte Street and its inhabitants, the area itself was not fashionable, and because it was not fashionable, it was affordable. The Rossettis could not presume affluence by any stretch of the imagination. But neither the surroundings in which they lived, nor the handed-down clothing that passed from the oldest to the youngest could depress the family's effervescence. They were Italian in their ways, and not bound by the conventions which regulated the British household. By being so they kept themselves to themselves and learned to be contented and entertained. Gabriel prepared his lectures for the University where he was a professor of Italian; and Frances knitted and sewed, and the children amused themselves any which way they could. From the very beginning the family was an homogenous group — working, playing, laughing, crying and living well together.

But what of the last addition to the family who arrived on December 5, 1830; what sort of child was Christina? She was temperamentally most like her brother, Dante Gabriel, and together they were known as "the storms," as opposed to Mary and William, who were known as "the calms." Although quiet and observant, Christina's blood was quick to boil, and she was predisposed to tantrums. But mostly she appeared to be all tameness and possessed a cool tranquility. Yet there were moments when all reasonableness flew away. Once to the horror of the family — having been scolded for some trivial matter — she seized a pair of scissors and ripped her arm. If this episode is unique, it is at least indicative of the exquisite sensitivity from which she suffered. So we are invited to see the strange concatenation and particular volatility which bubbled in her as a child. From the visible aspects to the profundities of her being, every part of her was permeated by bewildering discordances.

YET all this topsy-turviness was blended with marvelously handsome looks. If it could not be said that she was beautiful, it became apparent when in her presence that one was enchanted by her engaging features. The full thrust of her father's Italian blood matched well with her mother's looks, and this mixture produced a child whose expression was not only dominating, but whose every little trait completed the effect — her tallness, for she was tall as a child, the olive-pale complexion attached to a perfectly oval face, the hair, a rich dark brown parted with perfect symmetry down the middle. But of all her features, the most remarkable were her eyes. Framed with exquisite precision — they were immense — her eyes revealed a dark, precocious knowledge. "Those bright, bright eyes," which her father so much admired with their glowing keenness, whose color — so a careful observer noted — was neither brown, nor blue, nor black, changed with mood and interest. Not even the intensity of surrounding colors could regulate the hues. Those languid pools were the reflection of her detached soul and were indicative of the liberty of her own thoughts. And all of this was established by the time she was twelve.

So from that tender age she was surrounded by a household of those whose predominant characteristics were the sharpening of wits and the stimulating of each other in every intellectual faculty. Even then she knew that she would be a poet, for she found that she wrote with extraordinary ease, with the words positively running off the end of her pen. As she grew older, she found a group of intimate friends — most of whom were in the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood — who aided her in her poetic endeavors. And by the time she was eighteen, she was fully set in her ways.

But indeed her difficulties would be great, for she aspired to a profession where women were not allowed to tread. Not only was it an almost unimaginable thing in those days for a woman to make her own way in the world, but the profession for which Christina was clearly marked out — both by her instincts and capabilities — was a clearly masculine monopoly, E.B. Browning and the Brontes being notable exceptions. But she was a pertinacious spirit who would not be moved. Although she attempted to be a teacher here and a governess there — the want, the desire, the necessity, the very absurd impracticality of being a poet remained immovably fixed in her heart. And it grew in intensity day by day. So as she herself knew that she was pointed in the perfectly correct direction, she continued to write. She found that she was poet, so sure that she was right, that rarely were corrections or amendments necessary. Christina never questioned her ability as a poet, for she felt that as simply as she breathed, and as quietly as she sang, so naturally

was she able to evoke the scents and savors around her. She captured the colors of the seasons as they changed, and experienced the intensity of the emotions as they swept to and fro in her life. There is deeply imbedded in her person an element of harmony which exudes an undeniable poetical lyricism:

Ah welladay and wherefore am I here?
I sit alone all day I sit & think —

There is no preface, for none is required. Christina leaps into her poetry because there is no other vehicle of expression. There is nothing unmixed about the spontaneity with which she describes the complexion of her feelings:

I watch the sun arise, I watch it sink
And feel no soul-light tho the day is clear.

She knew somehow that her verses were good, and therefore the creative surge which welled within her was never inhibited. Of her greatest qualities as a poet, there immediately arises an extreme naturalness and deep spiritual resource. But if she wrote with a certain fluidness, it was because it was the panacea to the wretchedness, which at moments became a morbid melancholy. With the ensuing lines we are arrested by the premonition of some revelation which lurks within her:

Surely it is a folly; it is mere
Madness to stand forever on the brink
Of despair & yet not break the link . . . .

At these last lines we are shocked into an awareness of things which she implies, but feels are best left unsaid. But those are the very things which strike the strings and make us quiver inside. Even though the implication is clear from these lines which are so melodious and whose cadences are so sweet, we are compelled to question the essence of Christina's being. How was it composed, what were the ingedients, and in what proportion were they mixed together? How did this all blend in so complex a being, that she was capable — with so few words to cut so swiftly and so truly, to incise so deep an impression? The essence was, of course — religion.

What sort of religion was it that it appeared to be so dark, intense and foreboding, and one which wrought a strange metamorphosis upon young Christina? Somewhere in her adolescence she was marked to serve a personal God. But Christina's God, so she felt, was not a kind God, and so she prayed to him to be delivered from vanity and hypocrisy. And so it came about that she was delivered from vanity and hypocrisy. And then she felt that her God could not bear to see her happy and gay. For that too she prayed, and so it transpired that she was unlike other young ladies who thought of fineries and young men. Christina could only think of her relationship to God. It was to become a lifelong absorption, a peculiar relationship of her soul to God which

occupied her time. But this was not only due to some vocation, it was also due to a contemporary influence which came to bear upon her. How difficult it may appear to understand that this influence came from the Church of England.

The Church of England, so solid and competent, so unaesthetic and class-conscious, was long-rooted in the national life of England. This institution's structure had been built by men of strong will, beginning with Henry VIII, who by no longer tolerating the Pope and his specious endeavors, summarily dismissed him as extraneous to the devices and desires of his kingdom. So it remained a tradition that the Church attracted men of strong will, who disposed of piety as a consideration of small value.

But now in the 1830's there appeared underneath the apparent calmness, the preoccupations of a group of men who questioned and scrutinized the validity of a number of the Church's doctrines. The protagonists in this affair were men of the cloth who desired to plunge the mysteries of the Holy Catholic Church into the hearts and minds of all men. Theologians safely ensconced on their chairs were shaken with strange questions which had never entered their heads before. Had the church forgotten the mystery of the Sacraments; had the church lost faith in the Apostolic Succession, and was the church no longer interested in the Early Fathers? The Doctors of Divinity were horrified by the questions. Was it possible that a new tide was being swept in, and how could it be stemmed from sweeping across their comfortable parishes? The ever-widening ripples of notoriety issuing from these men were soon to make their names — Keble, Pusey, Newman, and Froude — come literally tumbling from the tips of tongues. They were clever young men, each possessing a full share of self-assurance and intolerance, much more than what is the common share in young men. However, what was singular about these men resided not so much in their tempers as in their tastes. The passions which inhabit most young blades were for these men turned to things transcendent. The ardors which impel youths to more fashionable pursuits, they turned to the state of their souls and confined their ideals to saintliness. But there was something much more substantial to the Oxford Movement, as it was to become known, than the mere "ritualistic practices". When Newman edited the "Tracts for the Times," the statement was clearly expressed and the Movement was launched. The Tracts explained what had to be done. Firstly, the church had to be purged and cleared of its errors; the yoke of secular power must be thrown off, and the dogma of the church militant here on earth must be reinstated in its former pre-eminence. How had it come about that this imperfect institution had become the receptacle for the august and infinite mysteries of the Christian faith? What appeared to be happening smacked of heresy and a return to the Church of Rome. Could it be possible that Papism had never left the shores of Albion, but had simply lain dormant?

Dante Gabriel was the first of the Rossettis to be attracted to the Movement and addressed his feelings towards it with:

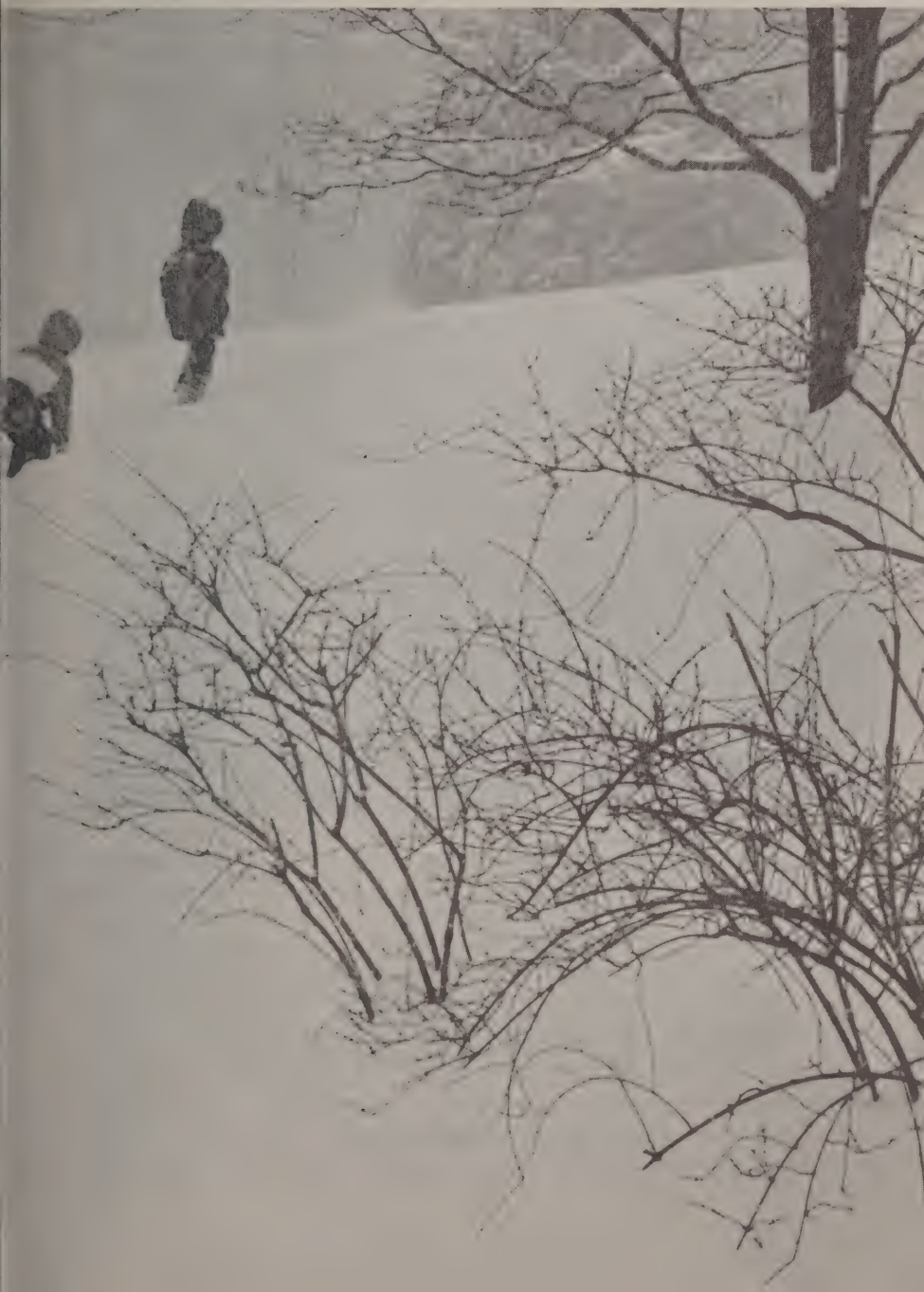
But having entered in, we shall find there

(continued on page 56)

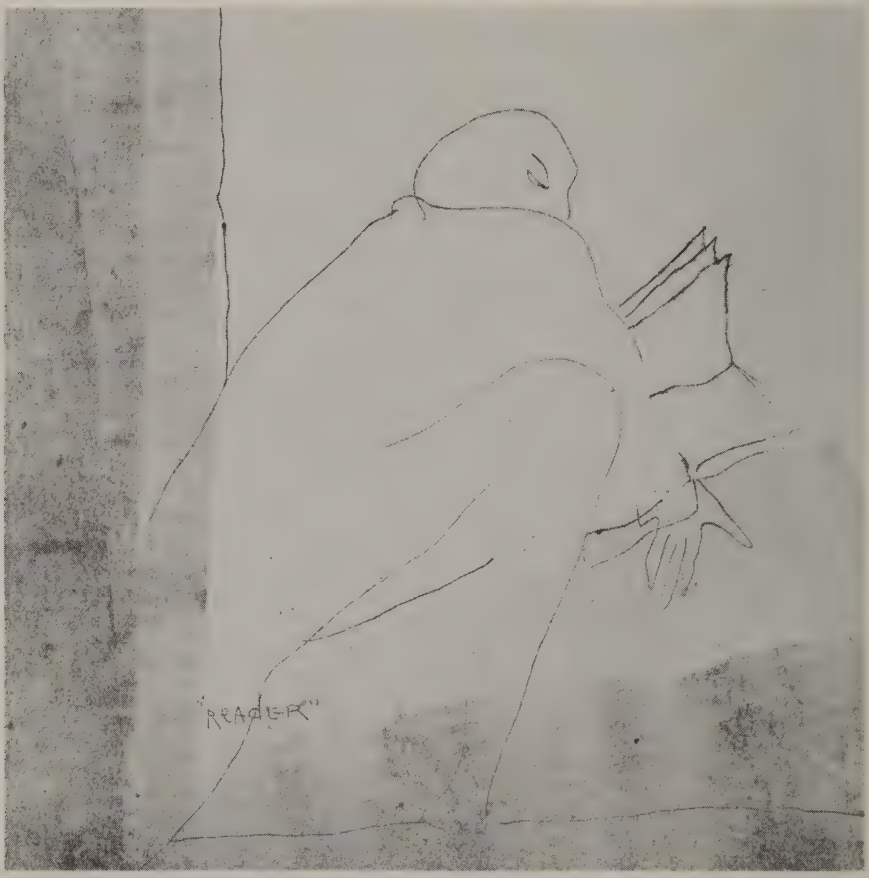
CHILDREN BY SNO

WLIGHT

Photograph by AMY STROMSTEN



DEVOTIONAL READING:



The Essential List

by DORIS DONNELLY

Devotional literature is never platonic; it addresses itself to the imagination and the intellect solely to influence the will. A devotional book in the inner history of the Christian community starts a vibration.

— Abbe Bremond

IT IS ALMOST FIFTY YEARS AGO that Princeton University professor George Thomas noticed that Harvard University offered to its undergraduates a course in great explorers such as Columbus, Magellan, Peary, Scott and Byrd. In response, Thomas offered to the undergraduates at Princeton a course on *spiritual* explorers that included Augustine, Eckhart, Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, George Fox and William Law. It was a matter of no small interest to students to realize how many of these spiritual explorers and their colleagues were young men and women no older than themselves when they set out on their quests.

Interest in devotional literature has grown steadily since George Thomas' pioneer course at Princeton. In fact, current catalogues from religious publishers frequently represent spiritual theology as half or even more than half of their offerings, and the sweeping tide of attention for spiritual biographies and guides to prayer shows no signs of diminishment. This enthusiasm for techniques and testimonies of meditation and prayer is helped, I believe, by a parallel unabated interest in psychology. The names of those religious pilgrims mentioned earlier offer within their combined literary output some of the most profound psychology of the human soul of all ages. These men and women knew the soul's heights and its depths and its susceptibility to guidance and its infinite strategy of evasion and retreat. It is doubtful that anyone today could compile a questionnaire analyzing religious experience that would reveal as searchingly the marks of the genuine or pseudo-religious

illumination as Augustine's *Confessions* or Teresa's *Interior Castle*, written centuries ago.

It is not only college students, of course, who experience this fascination with the spiritual journeys of others; in truth, all socio-economic, age, and ethnic groups declare precisely the same hunger. Most of the time, in my own experience as a teacher and mentor, that hunger expresses itself initially as a search for guidance in the classic writings of this specialized genre of literature. It might seem difficult for me to compile a standard list if I am honestly to accept the varying backgrounds of the questioners. Fortunately, however, devotional literature has an intensity, fervor, and reality that burns away denominational and cultural lines and speaks with a directness and a simplicity that touches almost every seeker. It is always a particular pleasure for me to see this happen, for there is then a sense of possessing and being possessed by a personality — *the* Personality — that endures and revivifies still another soul.

The "essential" list that I suggest to those interested in prayer is brief. At the outset I think it is important to plunge into Augustine's *Confessions*, most widely read of all religious literature since the time of the Bible with the possible exception of the *Imitation of Christ.* Readers of Augustine's *Confessions* will recognize in its pages a superb case study of a man torn by sin which is never abstract but always personal, concrete, searing, and divisive and by grace which persistently and patiently draws, excites, and finally conquers this magnificent and intelligent human being. There is in Augustine's *Confessions* a vivid psychological understanding of inner conflicts we all do battle with as well as the many events in our personal histories that lead us to the moment of surrender that is called conversion.

There is much to be said for reading Bernard of Clairvaux after Augustine. In a day when prayer is widely regarded as a subjective exercise which we initiate and where for a brief period at least we welcome God as our guest, an encounter with Bernard of Clairvaux's writings will be bracing contrast. For instead of our being the host and God the guest, Bernard reverses the role and shows the prevenient God as the host who in prayer initiates in *His* guest what *He* later crowns. Bernard goes even further and shows that we would not even seek God in prayer if God was not perpetually stirring up this seeking as a response to His prior initiative.

Action and Contemplation are very close companions; they live together in one house on equal terms; Martha is Mary's sister.

— Bernard of Clairvaux

Bernard's *On Consideration* is a rare opportunity to see the twelfth-century spiritual counselor of kings and popes advising one of his own Cistercian brothers who has just become Pope as Eugenius III on how he may spiritualize that dangerous office and live as an apostle within it. Devotional treatises abound that are designed to give help in learning how to bear suffering and loss and defeat, but how unusual it is to find one that gives good counsel on how to bear prosperity and power and heavy responsibility. Bernard's *On Consideration* is precisely such a manual.

The *Imitation of Christ* reinforces the good news of the Gospel that all are indeed called to follow Jesus Christ and that each of us will be fortified with the inner strength necessary for that transforming journey. This widely used book of devotion was introduced to the Christian world in 1441 by Thomas Kempis, a spiritual disciple of Gerhard Groot. It was Groot's remarkable spiritual fellowship, called the Brethren of the Common Life that sprang up in Holland at the close of the 14th century, and it was Groot's intimate journal that is now generally supposed to have furnished most of the material in the *Imitation.*

Frequently it is the strong ascetic tone of this classic that turns off its contemporary readers, yet the *Imitation* refuses to trivialize the cost that will be exacted in pursuit of intimate discipleship. Wisely diagnosing the insincerities and contrivances that postpone or detour our spiritual journeys, the *Imitation* offers guidance that helps us in our ordinary lives beset as they are with little crosses, disagreeable habits, routine hypocrisies, and ordinary lukewarmness. For these, the *Imitation* counsels perseverance and renewal, and the profound insight that we are each of us in need of arduous disciplines to remain faithful to the personal call of Jesus Christ.

Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle* is a masterpiece of the Counter Reforma-

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Late I have learned to love you, Beauty at once so ancient and so new! You were within me, and I was in the world outside myself. I searched for you outside myself and, disfigured as I was, I fell upon the lovely things of your creation. You called me; you cried aloud to me; you broke my barrier of deafness.

— Augustine, *The Confessions*

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tion and cannot be neglected in a list of classics, however short. Teresa herself was a shrewd Spanish religious guide of the sixteenth century whose own conversion experience happened during her middle age. Perhaps because of this, her no-nonsense approach to matters of the spirit is an irresistible combination of sanctity and common sense. Surely her grasp of psychology is unparalleled. It allows her, on one hand, to probe and delineate stages of spiritual development while, on the other hand, it enables her to offer uncanny awareness of every stratagem of the human heart that will startle those who think such things are a modern discovery.

While the *Interior Castle* is full of plain and wise advice for the beginner in prayer, it also serves the experienced and mature follower of Christ as well. Meister Eckhart says in his sermons, "There are many who are willing to follow our Lord half way — but not the other half." The *Interior Castle* talks not only to those recruits in prayer whose heels are continually nicked at by fiendish demons distracting them from lives of meditation and contemplation. It also speaks to disciples who are willing to enter "the other half", the half where the easy charts and pocket maps vanish and where there are no return-tickets available.

John Woolman's *Journal*, an American devotional classic of the eighteenth century, is especially relevant for contemporary readers. Two centuries before hunger, the energy shortage, poverty, and oppression became crises of world proportion, John Woolman perceived the seed that would produce them. His was the rare blend of spiritual sensitivity and social responsibility that prompted

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"When we love God with all our heart and all our strength, then in this love we love our neighbors as ourselves, and a tenderness of heart is felt toward all people."

— John Woolman

"Reflect a great deal, daughters, on some of the things that are here pointed out . . . The Lord will give you understanding of them so that out of dryness you may draw humility."

— St Teresa, *The Interior Castle*

him to opt for a life-style and calling that could prevent undue waste and exploitation. Woolman's warm, unadorned, simple conscientious *Journal,* written in the direct style characteristic of Quakers, remains the touching and inspiring account of a New Jersey tailor who records that from the age of thirteen his heart was made "tender and contrite, and universal love for my fellow creatures increased in me." For Woolman, that love grew until he became a principal instrument in the freeing of the slaves a century before the issue resulted in a national calamity. Woolman saw the solution to the slavery problem in Matthew 6:33 ("Seek first the Kingdom of God . . .") and in Matthew 25:40 ("Foreasmuch as ye did it to the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me.")

John Woolman's sense of mission revealed a tenderness to all who suffered unjustly. In these situations he urged the following of Christ in loving all creatures as the theme of his life. If we truly followed Christ, we would be content with meeting needs. The harmony of society is broken by self-centered pursuit of wealth and power. It is restored by following the Golden Rule.

Of all the better known devotional literature available today, these five serve well as suggestions of concrete material. There are infinite variations possible with such a list, but the list is basic enough to intrigue and arouse an eager interest for more. The fact that each of these suggestions is available in paperback is important since personal ownership of these books provides easy access for rereading at leisure as well as in time of spiritual distress.

The Burning Glass

A Story by HELEN NORRIS

To set the leaf afire. Or the words afire. Or the heart.

MISS ANNA WAITES was old when I was young. But there are times, in certain seasons, when I think of her as if she never had an age, no more than I. And then the two of us are comfortable together. Like the friends we never really were because of all those years in between.

I think I never saw Miss Anna Waites except in church. Her customary place was just in front of where my family sat. And she was always sitting when we came. Someone who did not care to stay would bring her early, I believe, and leave her like a fragile, shabby package on the pew. As I reflect upon it now, she always looked as if she had been first delivered to a wrong address and carelessly unwrapped and then quite hastily done up again, with several strings left dangling. She always seemed to have been hurried in her dressing, never given time enough. But once inside her pew, she sat in great tranquility, her dress and hat in peaceful disarray; meditating, I should think, on God. Or waiting on Him in a deep assurance of appointment.

I doubt if she was ever quite aware of the presence of a brimful little boy, although she smiled at me sometimes when the service was over. I had the impression that all things really new she had long since given up, and this included me. I did not mind in the least. It left me free to watch her in a wholehearted way I could never dream of watching the ones who watched me.

I noticed that she wore a diamond on her hand, quite large. And after she had knelt to pray and risen, often on her face there was a little wound in the perfect shape of the stone, where she had pressed her cheek. I always looked for it. It was like a sign.

Invariably, she knelt before each service. That was all. Even while we all confessed aloud our sinful state, she calmly sat. I thought it odd. For I was too young to understand how time itself can bind your limbs and sell you dear their every move. Nor did I ever see her stand, even when the hymns were sung.

But she used to follow the service in her prayer book with a good-sized, round-rimmed magnifying glass, moving it slowly down the page as if she searched for something she had lost, something valuable, almost invisible. She wore her round-rimmed spectacles, as well, and I never understood why they would not suffice. I myself could read the naked print quite easily over her shoulder. But once, while all except Miss Anna Waites were standing, I mounted suddenly the kneeling bench and looked down squarely through the glass she held. The clergyman had spoken, and I saw his words spring out at me, like letters written in the sky: THE LORD BE WITH YOU. And in a kind

of deep surprise that words could be so large and clear — and if so large, then surely true; and if so true, then surely mine —, instantly I lost my footing and fell off the bench and out of grace with everyone surrounding me.

The ancients called it a burning glass. For the light of the world was gathered through it into one small point, to set the leaf afire. Or the words afire. I shall go on seeing them for the rest of my life, and knowing them in the way that you can only know the words that have happened . . . that you have lived.

Yet it was later that they happened. And I was half a world away. Before I tell of it, I want to think of her a little longer as she was. The smallest things about her have grown large with time. For memory itself can be a burning glass.

She carried what was called a little drawstring ribbon bag. In summer it was white; in winter, black. And while the usher approached her with his plate of polished brass, weaving it discreetly through the pews like a shining thread, carefully she drew her folded fan from the opened bag and plunged her hand down in and slowly searched. As if she dipped into a pool to find the ring she once had dropped. How long it took! She might have held the burning glass and searched the page among the words. The usher stood, his face expressionless, his eyes on a distant point, avoiding the glances of the other ushers who had reaped their harvests and were waiting in the rear. Sometimes I turned to watch them where they stood, so strange they looked. Like little boys who had discovered something gay in a solemn place. And half the time — oh, fully half the time — she dropped her coins in the aisle, or on the floor at her feet where they made a ring. Till finally, with a martyred face, and at the latest possible moment — as if he almost had decided he would not — the usher stooped and groped and straightened, red and moist. I all but understood that for a single instant I had known his sharpest echo of the price of his salvation.

In a later age she might have been persuaded to remain at home and watch a service televised. It is sobering to remember how undone she was, how at a loss before the simplest acts of worship. Like getting up and down, and finding and delivering her offering to the Lord. Perhaps it was because she was stripped of these gestures, amid the busyness of others, that I watched her and went on watching down through the years. The single time she knelt, before each service began, became for me, in memory, charged with mercy; and somehow like an act of the rarest courtesy. Or like a word gracious past all deserving. And here is the wonder; the gracious word, the courtesy, the mercy were for me. As if they passed between herself and another, and then were given to me.

One Sunday she was sitting in our pew when we arrived. The relative who had dropped her, or the neighbor, had been careless; and we had to sit in hers. Suddenly behind me she had knelt to pray. It is terrible, when you are little, to have someone praying on the top of your head. I used to have it happen to me many times, because we always came early. My mother sang in the choir. When you are grown, and it no longer happens — when they only breathe a little damply on the back of your neck — you tend to forget how it is to have all that praying on the top of your head: as if it were a platter on which all the stray petitions are served up to God. It makes a terrible pressure. And when

my father's hair began to go on top, I used to think it was because of all the pressure that he probably endured when he was little, like me.

That day, while she was praying, something unexpected happened. Abruptly in the midst of it, I knew what she was praying, just as if she had spoken. Not all of it, but one thing, one sentence of her prayer. It was "God bless Davy and keep him straight."

It startled me so much that I could not move and was hauled up by my father when the opening hymn began.

I cannot explain how I knew what she had prayed. There was no possible doubt. I did not know any Davys, and I was too young to understand what she meant by "keep him straight."

When you are little, your name seems a thing mysteriously your own, which makes you what you are. You never hear a name lightly, your own or another's. Mine was Tom, and I could not imagine myself if it were not. Later, I asked my father if he knew who Davy was.

"Davy? David who?"

I did not tell him why I asked. I was not too young to know how much a parent can be told.

After that, while I stared on Sundays at her lacy collar, which was always half retreating down the neck of her dress, I was wondering about Davy. But I did not ask again. It was a secret we shared. I even thought that some day I would tell her I knew, when I was large enough to be of notice. And she would tell me who he was.

Then we moved away. And this is strangest of all, but it was as if the wonder about Davy moved with me. At first, he was only someone I had just missed knowing and was curious about. Maybe someone near my age, maybe someone quite old. But gradually he became for me a man I was to meet. I don't know when it started, but by the time I was twenty, I had a kind of faith that one day I would find him. I wondered now and then, with an idle humor, if he were really keeping straight. For I had since learned the meaning of the old-fashioned phrase.

If I heard the name spoken in a strange place, I would turn. Dave, David, Davy . . . I would always turn. And later — much later; it was during the war — when I passed an unknown man in a hospital bed, or asleep in the street, or lying half alive by the side of a road, I would often think to wonder if his name were David. At first, I believe that I would smile when I thought it. But the smile wore away with the months and the years . . . Till one day, overseas, near the end of the war, I walked into a small English church that I had passed before. To see what it was like inside, I told myself; and to escape the cold.

Near the front, four women and a man were praying for a list of soldiers who were missing. They were praying in a desparate and mechanical way, as if the whole world were lost, but they would not say it. They would go on pretending this was all, to the end. When the name of David was read aloud, it was exactly as if I had walked in to hear it.

Suddenly I was praying for this unknown David, as if he were my friend. And it is hard to explain, but Anna Waites was with me, praying for him, too. I

think that was why I seemed to know him at last. I knew him so well I did not need his face.

I could not think of him as lost or as missing, after that. And it seemed to me that somehow I must help him to live. The war must be ended so I could help him to live.

Yet it did not end. But a war is like that. There comes a time when you feel that everything you are will be over and done with, and the war will go on. Because you are one of those who make it go on. Anna Waites became for me a kind of dream. I think I wanted her that way. She was safe like that . . . in the past, in the dream. And I scarcely thought of David. For I wanted him safe, but I did not know why. Perhaps it was because he belonged to her.

When Christmas came that year I was still in England. By day, that is. By night I crossed the Channel, when the sky was right. It had been a good sky, and we had flown till Christmas Eve.

Mike and I went in to London. To celebrate, we called it. I was thinking in the cab, as we passed the darkened streets, that when you have grown up, in an odd sort of way you feel that you are on the other side of Christmas. You have passed it by. You have lost it somehow. If you sing enough or laugh enough, you seem to get it back. But not for long. There is always something that takes the edge off a Christmas. A war, for instance. Yet, after all, it doesn't have to be a war. Living takes the edge. Anyway, I thought, I have the war for my reason.

It had been a good sky . . . I walked into the lighted place all fresh from it, fresh from killing, though I did not think of it like that. Only, deep inside me was a crying out against it, as there is with most.

I went toward a back room where the lights were not so bright and a girl was singing. She had an English voice. It was deep and very sad. And what she was singing was a song about Christmas. I had never heard a Christmas song with that note of yearning; nor have I heard one since. And I thought it was her voice. It was the only way perhaps that she could sing a song.

"The first Christmas was a long time coming . . ."

Then I grew aware that she was singing about a world when that day was yet to come. And the strange, longing words found an echo in my heart.

"Moses, Moses and the long generations,
David . . . David, they must wait so long."

Then Mike took my arm and led me back and sat me down at a table where there was so much singing that I could not hear the other song. But it went on ringing in my head about David. Perhaps because of the name, perhaps because I wondered if those nights the Lord had been with me; I thought of Anna Waites.

David . . . David. But the song was of another David long ago, a king. That same David, whom the Lord had led beside still waters, took a rock and killed a man. But it was in the line of duty, and they made him a king.

Yet later, that same David saw and loved a woman, and he had her husband killed . . . David was any one who needed praying for.

I stood up then and walked around among the singing men. I was think-

ing that my name was David and that Anna Waites was praying, as she had always prayed, for David. I was her David, I was many Davids, and my need was great. All these months it was myself that I must somehow help to live . . . All these months it was myself, and the Davids in me. The men across the Channel, where I dropped my nightly fires, and the singing men around me crying out beneath their song — all were Davids, with me.

Anna Waites herself had never dreamed of such a need . . . But then, beneath her hand, as if she prayed them into being, I saw the words spring clear and mighty, larger for me than they had ever been: THE LORD BE WITH YOU.

He was born.

And I was born into the midst of singing men. It seemed to me they sang the peace that lay beyond our war. That peace somehow I knew, because she held for me the glass . . . or had been herself the glass that set the words afire in my heart.

GARDEN PSALM

by KATHERINE HANLEY

Rocks,
Knowing compromise weakens,
Don't.
You stand by them or toss them out
(Who is rock if not our God . . .)
Metaphor,
Metanoia.

CURRENT REPORTS

Naropa Institute

Buddhist, Christian, or "other," they came from all walks of life last summer to the Institute's second annual Conference on Christian and Buddhist Meditation. They were a remarkable lot — an Episcopalian priest who "sat *zazen*," a Benedictine monk who obtained his abbot's permission to study Zen, a pair of New York newly-weds who belonged to Unity, an ex-nun who had left the clerical life because her peers did not appreciate the mystic's path.

The five-day event, held in Boulder, Colorado, had its genesis in the friendship of Naropa founder Chogyam Trungpa with the late Thomas Merton. The men had talked of collaborating on a book about the contemplative life, but the project was curtailed by Merton's accidental death. Since, Trungpa has encouraged students to carry on the dialogue he and Merton started.

Seventy per cent of the participants this summer were Christians, whose churches have been experiencing grassroots revivals of interest in the contemplative tradition. Reasons for this revival are varied: the challenge of the renaissance of Buddhism in the West, the much-heralded publication of such books as the "Classics of Western Spirituality" being issued by the Paulist Press. Rather than provide in detail all the discussions which took place, I will focus on some highlights of this extraordinary ecumenical dialogue between East and West.

1) Beginnings of the Spiritual Path. According to faculty member Ozen Tendzin, seekers enter spiritual paths as a result of "nausea," or profound suffering and dissatisfaction. "When nausea becomes strongest, it ignites the inquisitive mind," he said. Spirituality emerges as a kind of waking from a dream.

2) God and Emptiness. Brother David Steindl-Rast, also a faculty member, remarked that there are not two more different approaches to spirituality than Christianity's and Buddhism's. One difference is the Christian emphasis on a personal god versus Buddhist emphasis on *sunyata*, or emptiness. Attempts to reconcile these ideas resulted in interesting discussions. God, for the Benedictine Steindl-Rast, is "the direction in which we go in our quest for meaning." For Thomas Keating, former abbot of St Joseph's monastery, God is "the ultimate mystery," to Mother Tessa Bieleki, Carmelite co-founder of the Spiritual Life Institute, the "passionate personal presence." Buddhism, on the other hand, is regarded as a non-theistic religion and, as such, attempts to describe transcendent, omnipresent reality in terms like *sunyata* or, as Zen faculty member Eido Roshi preferred, "as-it-isness."

"Buddhism comes from silence," Steindl-Rast said, "but the word comes

from silence and leads us back to silence. The Christian path is an attempt to know God, who is the silence, through the icon or Word or image. In the end of all our knowing, we will come to know God as the Unknown."

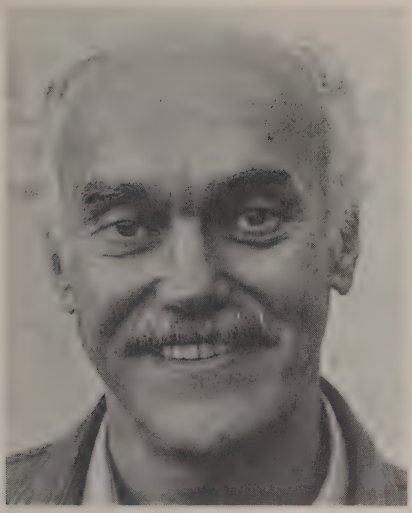
3) "Kill the Buddha!" A famous Zen story says you should "kill the Buddha" if you encounter him on the road. This story gave Eastern Orthodox Father Thomas Hopko, also a faculty member, pause. "If you meet Christ on the road," he said, "let him kill you through meditation on the word of God." In this manner, the desert fathers of Orthodoxy strove to destroy the false self.

Eido Roshi attempted to clarify the Zen story. He said that, since the person you are liable to meet on the path is probably actually not the true Christ or Buddha in yourself, you should crush that concept of Christ or Buddha. Tai Situ Rinpoche expanded the point: "Kill the Buddha or ask the Christ to kill you," he said. "Kill the duality and then you realize the ultimate essence of self or Buddha."

4) Practice versus Doctrine. "Neither doctrine nor practice is as important as our attitude," said Buddhist Joseph Goldstein, author of *The Experience of Insight.* "Without the study of scripture, there is the possibility of becoming too narrow in our practice . . . Rightly understood, doctrine is practice. Doctrine can be fingers pointing to the moon." According to Eido Roshi, practice is the most important thing in the Zen Buddhist tradition. Although Buddhists recognize five steps on the spiritual path — belief, understanding, practice, realization, and integration — without practice, realization cannot take place.

5) Time, Space, and Obedience. According to Steindl-Rast, St Benedict said the sacred life of the monastery needs a time-dimension and a space-dimension. The monk immerses himself in the sacred time of the monastery. Space in the monastery is also arranged for the goal of contemplation. Everything within it, from everyday objects to landscape, is to be treated with reverence. He said outsiders find the Benedictine rule of obedience hard to understand. "The answer to every 'why' is 'yes.' Everything makes sense in the peak experience. How can we live in this awareness always?" According to Keating, obedience helps the monk to realize there is a greater freedom in obeying a spiritual master than in any sort of independence. Obeying a human voice provides training for hearing the interior voice. "Obey," St Benedict wrote, "obey without delay."

6) Zen and Silence. One of the delights of the conference was the appearance of Eido Roshi, who, despite good-humored distaste for panel discussions, effortlessly conveyed the flavor of Zen. During one particularly arcane discussion, he related the story of a monk who persisted in asking a Zen master, "What is the true nature of Buddha dharma?" The master finally said, "Ah!" Roshi added: "Even to say 'ah!' is too much, but to participate on a panel, that is the worst!! — *Angelo John Lewis*



Ram Dass/Richard Alpert

For many of us Richard Alpert's changes were our changes. He was at the forefront of the psychedelic drug craze during the early 1960's, when he and Timothy Leary performed their now famous experiments at Harvard. He was front and center again, in the early 1970's, when the attention of the young shifted from drugs to spirituality. By then he had become "Ram Dass," or "servant of God" — a transformation described in his manifesto *Be Here Now,* which went into six printings.

These days he calls himself Richard Alpert again. This represents another metamorphosis, namely, the reclamation of the "human" side of his nature — the aspect of him that sometimes feels desires and gets lonely. He says "Richard Alpert" is a character he has tried to push aside for years in favor of the "Ram Dass," or "divine" side of his being. However he calls himself, though, there is no doubt that he remains a deeply spiritual being. He and/or the Hanuman Foundation he helped to found are involved in a number of social causes, including a prison-ashram project, a hospice project, and a project to eradicate curable blindness in Nepal. He lives according to the maxim of his guru: "The best form in which to worship God is every form." He does so with lightness, a sense of humor, and a self-deprecation that have endeared him to many on spiritual paths.

Following are excerpts from an interview I held with him in late June, after the nuclear disarmament demonstration in New York which he had attended not as a speaker or organizer but simply an ordinary citizen. With beard shaved off, it is easy to imagine him blending into crowds virtually unnoticed:

FIP: The *Times* once referred to you as a "Walking Whole Earth Catalogue," with something for everybody involved in spiritual quests. How does being such a public person affect your own *sadhana*, or spiritual work?

RA: Part of it *is* my *sadhana*. I used to milk my visibility for all it was worth. Then I began to see how empty it was. I could still be miserably lonely in the midst of adulation. So, although I still think it's a viable energy to work with, it doesn't have the pull on me it did before.

FIP: How do you reconcile Ram Dass and Richard Alpert?

RA: That has been one of the big works of the past years. I'm becoming Dick Alpert again because I feel Ram Dass is deep inside my being now and it's okay to come back into my humanity. On TV the other day, I said, "My name is Dick Alpert, also known as Ram Dass." Ram Dass, you see, is hard on a lot of people I would like to be able to communicate with. They hear "Ram

Dass," though, and think "occult" or "eastern mysticism" or "anti-Christ" and suddenly you're a bad guy.

FIP: What do you feel about your guru, Majaraji since he died or left his body?

RA: I miss him. But I feel he's more present and more pervasive than he ever was.

FIP: Is a guru really necessary?

RA: I think not. We can have gurus on other planes. Many people have spiritual guidance that comes either in the experience of a presence or through the inner heart. The statement "God, guru, and self are one" seems right to me. Because of their karmic predicament, some people will look for an external, others will go inside, and others to God.

FIP: What's your perspective on the differences between people of the East and people of the West?

RA: The Easterner is very deeply imbued with a sense of reincarnation, a sense of karma, and a sense of temporal spans that far exceed the human span. He also has a sense of the law of the universe, whether it's the Tao, the Vedas, or the Qu'ran. This seems to be a much more living truth for the Easterner. Or was. It changing awfully fast — there's a tremendous westernization of the East. In the West, it's as if people were afraid to hear these messages. They're so addicted to their intellects as arbiters of what is real that they tend to reject a lot of information available to them about themselves and their higher selves.

FIP: What do you think is the pull in the direction of the East for so many people?

RA: Easterners focused on maps of consciousness that resonated on experiences that Western religions weren't addressing themselves to. What drew me to the East was that maps were there for what was happening to me. Western religions were providing moral prescriptions to keep you from creating bad karma, but the East was providing information for people who were awakened.

FIP: What's the social responsibility of spiritually aware people?

RA: I've been working on that a lot. As I got quieter inside, what I experienced was a feeling that to be free I had to fully inhabit my incarnation, I had to understand what it meant that I was a man, a Jew, an American, part of an ecosystem, part of a species — all my different identities. I've been feeling that my silence was a political statement. There's no way you can't act when you're in an incarnation. Even your non-action is action. I finally found myself in social actions not out of fear or "ought" or "should," but just out of a sense of its being harmonious to my way of manifesting.

FIP: What spiritual practices do you observe regularly?

RA: I don't do them in the usual way. One thing is I bless my food every day. I offer my food to a guru, then ask him to bless the people I'm with and the sufferings I have been in contact with. I also spend some time of each day in very deep quietness. You could call it meditation. But I wouldn't. It's like Maharishi saying, "I didn't eat. They said I was fasting!" I don't have any heavy *sadhana*. Probably I'm a real schlock yogi in that sense. But that's the way I am. I've stopped being embarrassed about it. — *Angelo John Lewis*

Rajneesh in Oregon

In 1981, the Rajneesh Foundation International bought a 64,000-acre ranch in central Oregon. It was named Rajneeshpuram, which means "expression of Rajneesh." Building began on what is to be a large-scale farming commune. Bhagwan himself has been living there, health improved in the dry climate. After some months, he announced he was ready to see his *sannyasins* (disciples) again, and in July of this year I was one of about 7,000 from all over the world who attended the five-day celebration. It was my first opportunity to see Bhagwan and to be in the company of his *sannyasins.*

Everything had been done to insure the smooth running of the celebration. 1,800 tents were erected on three sites, named Buddha, Socrates, and Zarthustra fields. A fleet of rented school buses shuttled around the ranch. Lines for meals were short, snack-bars sold munchies, boutiques displayed books by Bhagwan, orange clothes, even Rajneesh paperweights and yoyos.

Satsang was the high point of each day. Bhagwan would enter to the accompaniment of music. There would be a ritualized greeting. After this, everyone would sit in silence for a while. There would be a reading from one of Bhagwan's discourses, then more silence, another reading, and silence again. The greeting ritual was repeated in parting, then there was music, and Bhagwan would leave. He would be driven once around the hall in one of his Rolls Royces. Everyone rushed to the edge of the hall for this. A love-affair was in progress. It blew through the hall and bathed everyone. During the week several members of the press who had come to write articles took *sannyas* themselves. Something infectious was in the air.

In contrast to the feelings of joy that Bhagwan's presence evoked in me, I found the *sannyasins* as a group rather one-dimensional. They behaved like other religious or personal-growth groups. They tended to speak in jargon. Everyone sang songs with mindless lyrics — for example, "this life our celebration" or "love life laughter" — which would be repeated ad naseum. The mood was similar to that of some fundamentalist Christian meetings. Instructions handed out at *satsang* included the request to "look ecstatic."

Although I was not excited by the lifestyle of the *sannyasins* as a whole, I think most of the criticisms made of Bhagwan and his disciples are either totally unjustified or else greatly exaggerated. *Sannyasins* certainly hug a lot, but most couples seemed to be involved in long-standing relationships, and the kind of vacant, brainwashed look that the press likes to ascribe to cult-members was absent here. Some *sannyasins* worship Bhagwan, others see him

as a reminder of their own true natures. After sex, the topic that is brought up most often in articles about Rajneesh is money. It is interesting to look closely at the issue of Bhagwan's wealth — the ease with which Rajneeshpuram was purchased, the fleet of Rolls Royces — because it is almost a parable. It illustrates some issues difficult to express in words. During the seven years that the Shree Rajneesh Ashram existed in Poona, in India, Bhagwan almost never left his room except to give discourses each morning and *darshan* (meeting with disciples) each evening. At these times he was driven the short distance from his room to the lecture hall in a Rolls Royce. Now, a man who lives entirely in his room can hardly be said to be attached to luxury. Why, then, the Rolls Royce? Some see it as one of Bhagwan's jokes. He has been very outspoken against the tradition of equating poverty with spirituality. He says technology can end hunger in India, but not until the Indian people stop believing there is something holy about poverty. Bhagwan's teaching is subtle. Sometimes I think the Rolls Royce is there to give the press something to write about. He has said all publicity, whether or not it is sympathetic or even accurate, will aid his program. Why, though, make life so easy for the media?

One of the pleasant surprises of my visit came when I toured the ranch. The *sannyasins* plan not only to restore the ecology of the land, eroded by overgrazing, but to increase its productivity by transforming it into a large farming commune. In only a year, with only about 300 permanent residents, they have made astonishing progress toward both goals. 19,000 trees were planted. One of the largest solar greenhouses in America is under construction. A drip irrigation system, developed in Israel, is being installed. There is a dairy. There are chickens, ducks, geese, and beehives. Bhagwan is a vegetarian, so no animals will be slaughtered for meat. Vineyards will grow four varieties of grapes. Over a million dollars is being spent a month, but the goal is for the ranch to become self-sufficient within three years. Since facilities are limited, people are invited to become residents only if they have skills which are needed.

Residents of the area are not entirely delighted with Rajneeshpuram. In the nearest town of Antelope (population 40), the ranch has bought the general store and turned it into the Zorba-the-Buddha Restaurant and Boutique. A watchdog group called "1,000 Friends of Oregon" has been fighting the permanent residents' desire to incorporate Rajneeshpuram as a city as well as other plans of expanding land-use. Opposition seems to be based on fear of "cults" in general and of Bhagwan's reputation as "a sex guru" in particular. Despite invitations, "1,000 Friends" has refused to send anyone to visit the ranch and see firsthand what is going on. It is hard to imagine a more ecologically conscious enterprise than what is taking place.

The operation of town and farm is both an experiment and an expression of the love Bhagwan's followers feel for him. They envision a town based on love, not politics. On the farm, people will work for the joy of working. From what I could see, this goal is already a reality. Residents work twelve-hour days, but the atmosphere is that of a big playground. There is hard work but no seriousness. — *James Finn*

LETTERS

Dear Sir:

I like the format of the poem (*"Just Thou and I, O Lord!", August, 1982*) and your placing the picture of Bernini's Teresa at its head. But I looked in vain for the statement that the work was a translation from the Polish of Zygmunt Krasinski written in 1851. I feel this is an important omission and ask that you insert it in your next issue. Please.

— Sister M.F. Tumasz (*Philadelphia, Pa.*)

Dear Sir:

I don't recall ever having seen such a well constructed (graphically) and wholistic spiritual journal before, and commend you and your organization for such a fine effort.

— John Ernst (*Oak View, California*)

Dear Sir:

John S.D. Glaus's article on William Blake (*"William Blake: Paragon or Pariah?," February, 1982*) was truly feeding.

— Ram Dass (*Santa Fe, New Mexico*)

Dear Sir:

I am delighted by your handling of my artice "Pilgrimage to Meherabad" (*August, 1982*). The layout and photographic reproduction are excellent, and our friends in India will be, we think, also pleased.

Future visitors to Meherabad will miss seeing dear Padri (page 40), who recently passed on. Padri was an incredibly versatile and knowledgeable man who was, according to Meher Baba, one of the "pillars of Meherabad." Panday, the photographer/painter (page 39), also has died since our visit, but some of his photos of Avatar Meher Baba will be around for centuries.

Persons who wish to visit Meherabad should write to Baba's sister, Mani S. Irani, at the following address: Avatar Meher Baba Trust, King's Road, Ahmednagar (M.S.), India. Visitors are asked not to come to Meherabad from March 15 to June 15. This is the hottest time of the year in India, and the new Pilgrims' Center is closed during this period. Baba's tomb, of course, may be visited throughout the year, but those coming during the hot season will need to stay at a hotel in Ahmednagar and will not be able to spend time with Baba's *mandali* (close disciples).

Readers who wish further information about Meher Baba may write to: Meher Spiritual Center, PO Box 487, Myrtle Beach, S.C. 29577.

— William M. Stephens (*Nashville, Tennessee*)

Dear Sir:

Sometime after 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 12, Lou and I arrived in Penn Station, New York City. We had come to walk in the "March for Peace." We had arrived too late to participate in the activities at the United Nations but hoped to join in the march at some point. It was our good fortune that a feeder group from New Jersey was within a block of the station waiting to join the marchers when they came up from the United Nations.

There was a wait of almost an hour before this feeder group could leave. This gave us a chance to look around at the people who were collecting in our crowd of several hundred. There were handicapped persons in wheelchairs, tiny babies in strollers, white haired men and women. There were Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, intellectuals and blue collar workers. Everywhere there were buttons, flags, pamphlets and posters.

The spirit of the group was one of anticipation, excitement, even exuberance. They/we were a community of humanity united in a common peace, survival, love, disarmament. Never once in this group or anywhere among the marchers did I hear or see unkindness or disorder. Everyone radiated a celebrative, party spirit which Lou and I found contagious. The New Jersey group did not seem to mind adopting us, so we walked with them.

And walk we did, at least five miles. I wish I could remember the slogans which were on the thousands of banners in that procession. I do not. What I do remember is that, however they were painted or sewn or printed, they had one essential message: "We want life and not death, love and not hate, peace and not war." As Lou and I walked along with this sea of brothers and sisters who were making the most phenomenal statement for peace we had ever experienced, our hearts were strangely warmed, our spirits soared, and we knew a new meaning for the term, "communion of saints."

I was moved to tears several times during the two and a half hour walk by the sights and sounds all around me. The lookers-on appeared to be friendly and supportive. Occasionally folks who were hanging out of the apartment windows waved and applauded; sometimes they hung out their own banners to greet us. Enterprising individuals had set up small stands along the way where, for a price, one could purchase something to drink or eat. There were T'ai Chi dancers at one corner, sidewalk sales at another, and always smiling policemen standing by quietly watching. Occasionally from within the marching ranks someone would lead a cheer or hoist a tune. Everywhere, from within the marching group and from the sidewalks, I felt only friendliness and support coming toward me.

About 1:30, we arrived at Central Park. Hundreds of thousands of people were already settled on the grass and the speeches and entertainment were already in progress. Lou and I couldn't get anywhere near the stage and from where we finally located ourselves on the grass, in spite of loudspeakers, we could seldom hear what was being said. It didn't matter. We were there! We watched the people around us. We saw Buddhist monks embrace an elderly man and his wife who had to leave. East and West embraced. Children crawled around on the grass and parents calmly fetched them. We saw the most widely assorted humanity we had ever seen. And it was good!

One part of a speech I did hear was about bombs and babies. The speaker reminded us that bombs kill babies — Communist and American babies. She declared, "A baby is a baby is a baby!" This reminded Lou of one of the banners she had noticed several times on the walk, "Children need loving arms, not nuclear arms."

When we left the park about 2:30, we could see marchers from the end of the parade still arriving. Never have I seen so many people or been or felt so close to so many. I believe that the estimate that there were 750,000 persons there is a fair estimate.

There was no violence that day. No incidents were reported. According to the *New York Times* the next day, the park was cleaned up within an hour after the groups left. Caring marchers left the park as clean as they had found it. I saw no single negative media report of this march!

I will never forget that holy Saturday in June when I walked from Penn Station to Central Park with ¾ million beautiful human beings to join them in making a statement to President Ronald Reagan and to the whole world that WE WANT WAR NO MORE!

— Carole Chase (*Elon College, North Carolina*)

Dear Sir:

Thank you for your wonderful publications!

— Sunshine Spinola (*Seattle, Wash.*)

Dear Sir:

I saw your ad in *New Age.* It seems you have a good idea. However, I question the packaging of it under the title "Fellowship in Prayer." Many people are turned off by the idea of "prayer." "Meditation" has become more acceptable. There is indeed an area of overlap between the two terms, but what I am saying is that "prayer" has become a buzz-word with negative connotations for many otherwise spiritual individuals — for example, people of a scientific turn of mind who might be interested in the new work of Fritzjof Capra (*The Tao of Physics, etc.*), but not in a "prayerful" approach to "God." It seems that you are aware of such people, since you have published a special issue (November, 1981) on "The Unchurched".

I just want to point out that you probably won't attract many unchurched readers with a name like Fellowship in Prayer.

I suggest you find a new name of more universal connotation, like *Search For Truth.*

— Freeman Smith (*Santa Cruz, California*)

Dear Sir:

I enjoy your publication. I find I cannot get my friends to read it, or even open it up, though, because of its name. The word "fellowship" is the trouble, I think. To most people it's an old-fashioned word connoting either an all-male group or a bunch of fundamentalist Christians, which, I gather, is not what your Fellowship is. Please change the name so that it tells more accurately what you are all about.

— Jane Rhodes (*Chagrin Falls, Ohio*)

"LA NATIVITE" *(continued from page 2)*

the Age of Louis XIII, the *Grand Siecle* of Louis XIV would not have seen the light of day.

Georges de la Tour was born at Vic-sur-Seille on March 19, 1593, and died at Luneville on January 30, 1652. He remained a true son of the Lorraine, with only brief excursions away from his native soil. Of his friends and acquaintances, none made a more lasting impression than Alphonse de Ramberviller. This man of notable distinction possessed more than his share of religious exaltation and mysticism, and those personal ingredients developed the latent mysticism in his friend. When it took hold on Georges, it rose with extraordinary swiftness. Georges de la Tour adopted this thematic religiosity to his style of painting and made it congenial to himself, and as time passed, it became his *cachet.* The solitary source of light, as seen in "La Nativite," is as glorious as some shining star in the firmament.

The primary qualities of his style — those that immediately impress us — are the grandeur and nobility of spirit. Of the elements which marked his style, we can isolate the specialized use of lighting which, although developed by Caravaggio and the other *tenebristi,* is a much more valuable commodity in the works of de la Tour. The juxtaposition of light and darkness, of revelation and concealment, is employed with greater effect so as not to delineate the real from the mystical. His use of color is one of the most powerful avenues of communicating the intense mystical resonance of the simple human event which is implied in "La Nativite."

But what of Georges de la Tour's descent into obscurity. A primary cause can be attributed to the establishment of a code prescribed during the *Grand Siecle* specifically designed to enhance the magnificence of Louis XIV. A second and perhaps more prominent reason may be summed up by Bernini's dictum, "le naturel n'est pas beau", a remark containing antagonistic repercussions against the beautiful realism which the age of Louis XIII tended towards and so magnificently achieved through the works of Poussin, Callot, and Claude Gellee "Le Lorrain." But there was something else. Georges de la Tour apparently lacked *le grand gout.* His essential characteristic would only lead him to conceive and execute those religious themes in which a profound depth of spiritual and mystical significance is divined. But perhaps of greater consequence was the fact that a new tide was being swept in, an era of change was thick in the *Academie,* which was established by Richelieu in 1648. Louis XIV, who took personal interest in the arts, demanded compensation in dreams of power and transcendental glory through the embellishment and inflation of art. By doing so he brushed aside the realism of an earlier period and heralded in the Baroque. And with the old, Georges de la Tour, represented in his personal iconography a divine manifestation through the simplicity of a birth, as portrayed in "La Nativite".

If, "the 17th Century found beauty in the darkness that swallows up form", then Georges de la Tour suffered the fate which that darkness provided: oblivion.

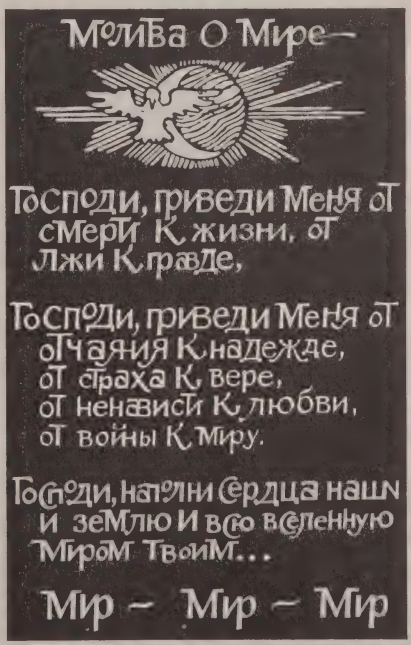
"Recognizing," as the *New York Times* says, "that most voters care much more about the economy than the so-called 'social issues,'" the Senate did nothing this summer about the President's prayer amendment.

Networking for a World United in Prayer

In order to help expand the practice of prayer and meditation, Fellowship in Prayer is building a "networking" system. There are now thousands of prayer and meditation groups throughout this country and the rest of the world, and we would like to compile a list of as many of them as possible. This list would make it possible for us to refer our readers to groups and organizations in their areas, to help groups contact each other, and to send a representative of Fellowship in Prayer to groups interested in hosting a speaker on prayer and meditation. We invite you to write to us about your group or organization, giving us information on time and place of meetings; name, address, and phone number of person to contact for information; and a brief description of the group's activities, structure, and spiritual practices.

Zugos Fellowship

A free prayer newsletter and a series of Lessons in Prayer are available from Zugos Fellowship in Tennessee. Started by a Christian woman who is also trained in meditation and yoga, the fellowship combines eastern and Christian techniques of prayer. It was originally called "Christian Yoga." *Zugos* is a Greek word which means "yoke"; *yoga* means "yoke" in Sanskrit. For information write to: Anne Long, P.O. Box 828, Newport, Tenn. 37821.



Efforts continue to introduce the Prayer for Peace around the world. The prayer, reproduced her (right) in its Russian version, was offered in both English and Russian at the World Conference of religious leaders held in Moscow last May.

Eye on the Future

The World Future Society held its fourth general assembly in Washington, D.C. last summer. Three thousand attended the five-day conference; speakers included Marilyn Ferguson, Buckminster Fuller, Ellen Burstyn, Fritzjof Capra, Sen. Gary Hart (D-Colo.), and Sen. Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.). The emphasis was on technology in the context of communications. Values were stressed as having an influence on how communications technologies will shape the future. Rep. Charlie Rose (D-N.C.) pointed out, "The new technologies could be used to achieve the goal of developing full human potential. Some people may want to use them to attain a totalitarian conformity, but they have the capacity to liberate the spiritual quest and transform society."

Computer technology is expected to combine with cable television to provide a new era in communications for all of us, experts say. The combination of computers and cable television will make possible "interactive" telecommunications, which will allow people to perform such varied tasks as paying bills, voting, and training for jobs from their homes. Religious denominations are expected to keep pace with these rapid developments in cable systems. Many major religious denominations, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and Mormon, are starting or planning their own telecommunications satellite networks. Bill Grieg, of Gospel Light Publications, soon to change its name to Gospel Light Communications, sums up the interest of religious organizations in telecommunications this way: "The way we get information is going to change drastically. We're going to have to confront this social and cultural change with positive alternatives."

International Forgiveness Week 1983

The fifth annual *International Forgiveness Week* will be observed by individuals, families, organizations, cities, and nations January 23-29, 1983. Observance can take the form of a private meditation each day of the week, a public festival, or a family ritual. The following schedule can help you observe *International Forgiveness Week:*

1st Day: Forgive yourself
2nd Day: Forgive your family
3rd Day: Forgive your friends and associates
4th Day: Forgive across economic lines within your own nation
5th Day: Forgive across cultural lines within your own nation
6th Day: Forgive across political lines within your own nation
7th Day Forgive other nations

For more information contact: The Peace Project, Aloha #244, 1290-D Maunakea St., Honolulu, Hawaii 96817.

Dalai Lama on Disarmament

The Dalai Lama, unable to attend the World Conference for religious leaders held last May in Moscow, was

appointed honorary patron of that conference. He sent a message, which was read by Tenzin Geyche Tethong, a Deputy Minister of the Tibetan Government-in-exile and Director of its Health Department. In that message, the Dalai Lama stated that "All the major religions of the world are only different instruments to make man a better human being. Throughout the ages they have taught basically the same things, most important of them all the development of kindness, compassion, love and respect for our fellow human beings." On the threat of nuclear war, he summarized, "The question is not whether the Soviet Union or the United States will survive a nuclear holocaust. Mankind is at stake . . . If humanity is to continue, we must bring an end to this threat of a nuclear war."

Survey finds "Unchurched" embittered by religion, but positive on values

Many unchurched Americans are embittered by organized religion but are positive about its role teaching moral values, according to a survey taken for Religion in American Life (RIAL).

Organized religion was rejected by the unchurched because it was felt to be materialistic, too powerful, hypo-critical, and not relevant to modern life, according to the survey. On the other hand, the report said the unchurched expressed positive attitudes toward organized religion in that it can teach moral values, give a sense of identity, promote family togetherness, and meet inner spiritual needs.

RIAL is an interfaith organization which commissions public-service advertising on the importance of faith and worship. It asked Compton Advertising, Inc., to conduct a research project last year to determine the attitudes of unchurched Americans as well as how the clergy respond to those attitudes. The results were reported at RIAL's annual meeting here.

The research was conducted among men and women aged 25 to 40 in five cities who did not belong to a house of worship and had not attended a service of worship for six months other than on special occasions.

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CHRISTINA ROSSETTI: THE POET OF SUFFERING

(continued from page 29)

Silence, and sudden dimness, and deep prayer
And faces of carved angels all about.

For Christina, this form of religious fervor became, quite simply and without question, the most important thing in her life. Temperamentally, as her brother William said, "I had often thought that Christina's proper place was in the Roman Catholic Church." But in reality that could not be so. For although she may have felt an intense longing to have her curiosity satisfied by angelic visitations and the like, she could not relinquish her hold on a personal God — one untrapped by dogma; one unconfined by the heavily accented air of clerical sanctity. For she felt that the only allegiance she owed was to God and to God alone, not one imposed by the fervor of spiritual authority. But there is another reason why Christina could not have embraced this new tide. She found it impossible to reconcile with her immense powers of admiration for her mother and the English ancestry which coursed through her veins. That alone would have made her uncomfortable with the Church of Rome.

But Christina, in all her years, lived neither in Charlotte Street nor Torrington Square, but inhabited some curious region where no apparent or visible manifestations were to be seen. Christina Rossetti dwelt in her heart, and her heart was full of God.

In understanding Christina's poetry, it is essential to view it as devotional and non-dogmatic. For if she viewed herself as an instrument for popularizing certain views, they were devotional ones untainted with the thematic religiosity that the Movement was now awakening in the dormant church. To admire her poetry is to demand that we fully comprehend her commitment to God. Without that understanding, the beauty of her lyrics escapes us like water through a sieve. Her verses are the personal triumph of a communion with God, irrespective how she saw or understood her God. The poems are the panacea to the intense agony which radiated from her soul, for it is only from a poet who suffered — as she did, that such empyrean verses could have been issued:

When sick of life and all the world —
How sick of all desire but Thee! —
I lift mine eyes up to the hills,
Eyes of my heart that see,
I see beyond all death and ills
Refreshing green for heart and eyes,
The golden streets and gateways pearled,
The trees of Paradise.

It was from that knot of agony, from that intense center, from that inextinguishable fire that poured forth her most beautiful poems. It was because of it that she accepted unequivocally the presence of God. But because it entailed

such rigorous discipline, it also affected all of her relationships, especially those concerning the heart. It was somewhere during that vague period between adolescence and adulthood that Christina first encountered love.

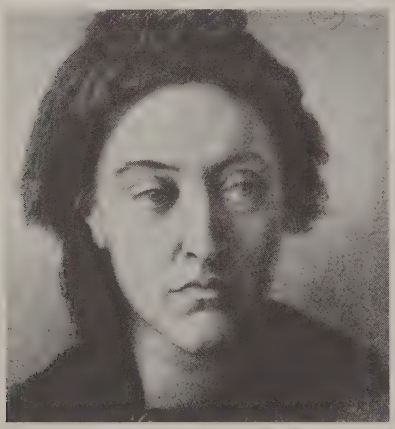
By the time she was eighteen, and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood had been established, Christina had become close friends with a certain James Collinson. A sincere affection grew between them. She eventually grew to love him, and he in turn reciprocated the feeling. But a serious impediment existed which was to fray the ties between them. Mr. Collinson was a Roman Catholic. Christina could understand this *penchant* for the Church of Rome, but because of it she would not allow herself to have him. For James it was a difficult question. To love and marry Christina meant that he would have to convert, and conversion was an arduous task, perhaps it would even be dangerous to his soul in the hereafter. He vacillated, not sure of the direction to take. But he relented and turned his back on his Catholicism and joined the Church of England. Christina was suitably impressed. But James had a stomach half-full of sand, and as he could not bear the thought of eternal damnation, he changed his mind and crawled back to Rome. Christina was heartbroken, but in the light of her individual conscience, she cast him out.

And there was another. Charles Bagot Cayley, who was served an equally impressive dessert by fate. Christina was at the time of their first encounter in her mid-thirties, and a more mature and sedate woman. Everything pointed to a suitable marriage. Cayley was eminently qualified as a suitor, and almost everything about his life was appealing. His looks were rather stately, and his mind was full of erudition (he had translated the Gospel into Iroquois). He was dedicated to the simple life of scholarly and unworldly interests. But once again, the question of God loomed large on the horizon. Mr Cayley was a Protestant. That to Christina was acceptable. But Mr Cayley was not sure whether there was a God in heaven. Alas, for him, that was his undoing. Even though he played a good hand of cards, and Christina too enjoyed a good game of cards; and even though he loved little furry animals, and Christina too loved little furry animals (and so designated him with the endearment, "my special little mole"), the entrance into Christina's heart was through heaven. So Charles Bagot Cayley was forced out of her life also. But she found room in her heart to forgive him, and they remained steadfast friends until the end of his life.

Now, as we arrive somewhere near the middle of Christina's life, we shall see how she fared as a poet and how as a poet she fell under public scrutiny and acclaim. Christina herself would say that she had very little to say about the matter. It is certainly without doubt that outside of George Herbert, the 17th-century metaphysical poet, she wrote the finest devotional poetry ever created in English. This was due to the fact that she was more concerned with the state of her soul that with her reputation as a poet. Whatever way the poetry arrived off her pen, there is that special simplicity which is always apparent — a love of God and family, and an unpretentious acceptance of life marked by a true delight in all God's works.

But even with the modest acclaim and success which her poetry attracted, her life remained unchanged. A slight, barely perceptible ripple of excitement

came from the audience's approval of the pure, undidactic verse. Yet the modicum of success which was hers did not go unnoticed by the critics. John Ruskin, the famous Victorian man of arts and letters, said that Christina should, "exercise herself in the severest commonplace of metre until she can write as the public like." To poets of any other caliber this remark would have come as a deathblow, full of dreadful mortifications. But Christina avoided any book which may have undermined her faith or any persons who may have troubled her instincts. If we plot Christina's course as a poet, we see that she developed very little, for she was an instinctive one. If she refused to take her success seriously or act pompously, she was always ready to make sly satirical digs at those eminent personages who took themselves too seriously. There is no elaborate accretion in her poetry. Christina remained pure, pristine; and if the poetry is full, it is only with the rhapsodic essentials — only vivid imagery within the verses and without explanations or commentaries, transitions or padding. We receive the quintessence of an anxious, pious, God-fearing, God-loving individual who, with her odd neurotic history, transmuted words into golden images.



BY the time she was fifty, she began to show signs of an illness which had been latent since her fifteenth year. She suffered greatly from the physical affliction and the effects it bore upon her appearance, and the terrible depressions into which she was thrown. However painful the illness, however deep the depression, she submitted to it stoically and with much fortitude. In spite of the weariness, distaste, and exhaustion, Christina still possessed the joy of giving. Her spiritual constitution only grew in depth and amplitude. To her sister-in-law she wrote, "I am shocked and pained to know that you are suffering, dear sister, I would help you if I could." She was Christina the loving at all times. There was never any doubt, nor any question as to how the individual soul should meet its chiefest ills — God, pure and simple, could sustain when all else failed. There was no other comfort or succor.

Fortuitously, the illness subsided, and although her health was to hang precariously, a series of events was to plague and test the very mettle of her faith. In 1876, her sister Maria was to die. The event was regarded by Christina as a venerated moment rather than a sad loss. Maria, the Anglican nun, to whom she referred to in her works as the "dear saint," appeared in the "Face of the Deep" and "Time Flies."

In 1882, Dante Gabriel's tragic life was to end. There had always been a very special place in Christina's heart for this dear brother. He had remained

for her — although bearded and dreamy, neurotic, and full of chloral and alcohol — a pink-cheeked rotundity, an infant still, who required the administrations of his women. They found him adorable and important and because of the serried emotions which knit the fabric of their lives so closely together, those very women enabled him to continue in his dissolute and genius ways. His sins — and in the Age of Victoria, sins were a serious matter — might, somehow or other, be disregarded. Dante Gabriel's death was a serious blow to Christina, and in quick succession, Charles Cayley and her mother followed in his footsteps.

In August of 1894, the remission from her illness ended and she was once again thrust into severe pain and depression; a state from which she was never to recover. But those last months preceding her death were very wonderful. Until the end she revealed through her poetry the transience of beauty and life and she feasted her poetry upon it. With the onset of the inevitable end, death and oblivion caress her songs as water laps at one's feet:

SLEEPING AT LAST

Sleeping at last, the trouble and tumult over,
Sleeping at last, the struggle and horror past,
Cold and white, out of sight of friend and of lover,
Sleeping at last.

No more a tired heart downcast or overcast,
No more pangs that wring or shifting fears that hover,
Sleeping at last in a dreamless sleep locked fast.

Fast asleep. Singing birds in their leafy cover
Cannot wake her, nor shake her the gusty blast.
Under the purple thyme and the purple clover
Sleeping at last.

EPILOGUE

We know that Christina Rossetti died on December 29, 1894. We are also aware that she died as she had lived, with her life and aspirations constantly strained upwards towards God, for she seemed to be "struggling — panting up to God." She had realized that she had been nothing more than an instrument of God; that a far firmer hand had written the verses and that the music which she heard was of things breathing towards God. Christina Rossetti was indeed an artist caught and enraptured in the starry chains of her heavenly adventure.

When at Mrs Tebbs' for tea, she arose and announced, "I am Christina Rossetti," those who were present must have wondered at the strange pronouncement. Only Christina was aware that she did not stand there alone.

THE NON-SPECIFIC BASIS OF IDEAL PRAYER *(continued from page 15)*

prayer. Prayer would become ideal; it would fulfill the scripture that "all things, whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

It is precisely the fact that this experience lies outside the created world, and predates all organized religion (because it resides in the primal nature of man), that makes it unclaimable, in an exclusive sense, by any religion or philosophy. It is the holistic pure knowledge which has formed the basis of all spiritual wisdom. To the Christian, however, it is that aspect of Jesus of which he spoke when saying, "Before the world was, I am." When permanently stabilized, it is Christian salvation. And when expressed in full complement in thought and action, it demonstrates clearly, through producing good works, that they are the result of salvation and not its cause.

It has been widely thought that the isolation of monastic life is necessary to this divine contemplation. But the purpose of isolation is only to free the mind from daily specifics so that in prayer the activity of thought is more easily resolved into the silence of God. Therefore it is accomplishable even for those who live in the world. It depends fundamentally only upon the mind's built-in ability to experience its least excited state, its simplest form of awareness. If the mind can flow in an active channel of thought, as it does in daily activity, it can flow in a less active one, and can ultimately achieve least excitation. The ability to do less is always contained in the ability to do more, just as the ability to walk is contained in the ability to run.

Though we have seen that manifest thought is functionally separate from unmanifest God, it is equally true that, since the former arises exclusively from the latter, they are in a fundamental sense the same. The peel of an orange is quite different from the inner juice, but it is certainly all orange. Thus the ability of the mind to attain non-specific status is fixed in the fundamental unity and harmony between unlocalized God and localized man, and does not turn on the degree of worldly involvement. We see this proven in the lives of all active, godly men, and in the supreme example of the Lord Himself who lived "in the world but not of it."

Our mind is a wave on the ocean of God — of identical content, but of a different and specified form. But if it functions only as rising waves, it remains separate from God's Being and never participates in His oceanic grace. One is left to guess his true needs and, through his limited individual will, is apt to unconciously work at cross purposes with what he asks in prayer. But when his mind settles to the level of the ocean, it achieves the unboundedness that allows his desire to be God's desire for the world. In true non-specificity the complete, transcendental power of his mind has been revealed, which is the power of God. Then on that basis, when the mind rises to perform thought and action it brings with it the whole force of the ocean to perform God's works.

It is only in the stillness of the mind that, by leaving the *thought* of Him, we truly come unto Him. This is surely what made the Psalmist say, "Be still and know that I am God."

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MEDITATION

THE MAGI

by William Butler Yeats

Now as at all times I can see in the mind's eye,
In their stiff, painted clothes, the pale unsatisfied ones
Appear and disappear in the blue depth of the sky
With all their ancient faces like rain-beaten stones,
And all their helms of silver hovering side by side,
And all their eyes still fixed, hoping to find once more,
Being by Calvary's turbulence unsatisfied,
The uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor.

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